



**CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN
FOR MONTANA**

FFY 2008-2009

This Plan describes the CCDF program to be conducted by the State for the period 10/1/07 – 9/30/09. As provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations, the Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including changing the options selected or described herein.

The official text of the applicable laws and regulations govern, and the Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to them regardless of the fact that, for purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 165 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

(Form ACF 118 Approved OMB Number: 0970-0114 expires 06/30/2009)

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AMENDMENTS LOG
Child Care and Development Services Plan for
For the period: 10/1/07 – 9/30/09

SECTION AMENDED	EFFECTIVE/ PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE	DATE SUBMITTED TO ACF	DATE APPROVED BY ACF

Instructions:

- 1) Lead Agency completes the first 3 columns and sends a photocopy of this Log (showing the latest amendment sent to ACF) and the amended section(s) to the ACF Regional contact. A copy of the Log, showing the latest amendment pending in ACF, is retained in the Lead Agency's Plan.
- 2) ACF completes column 4 and returns a photocopy of the Log to the grantee.
- 3) The Lead Agency replaces this page in the Plan with the copy of the Log received from ACF showing the approval date.

Note: This process depends on repeated subsequent use of the same Log page over the life of the Plan. At any time the Log should reflect all amendments, both approved and pending in ACF. The Lead Agency is advised to retain those "old" plan pages that are superseded by amendments in a separate appendix to its Plan.

PART 1

ADMINISTRATION

The agency shown below has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State (or Territory), to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E)

1.1 Lead Agency Information (as designated by State chief executive officer)

Name of Lead Agency: Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services
Address of Lead Agency: PO Box 4210
Helena, MT 59620-4210
Name and Title of the Lead Agency's Chief Executive Officer: Joan Miles
Phone Number: 406-444-3487
Fax Number: 406-444-1970
E-Mail Address: jmiles@mt.gov
Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): www.dphhs.mt.gov

1.2 State Child Care (CCDF) Contact Information (day-to-day contact)

Name of the State Child Care Contact (CCDF): Jamie Palagi
Title of State Child Care Contact: Chief, Early Childhood Services Bureau
Address: PO Box 202925
Helena, MT 59620-2925
Phone Number: 406-444-1828
Fax Number: 406-444-2547
E-Mail Address: jpalagi@mt.gov
Phone Number for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any):
1-866-239-0458
Web Address for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any):
www.childcare.mt.gov

1.3 Estimated Funding

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amounts will be available for child care services and related activities during the 1-year period: October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008. (§98.13(a))

CCDF: \$13,429,303
Federal TANF Transfer to CCDF: \$7,676,010
Direct Federal TANF Spending on Child Care: \$683,784
State CCDF Maintenance of Effort Funds: \$1,313,990
State Matching Funds: \$2,028,998

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Total Funds Available: \$25,124,085

1.4 Estimated Administration Cost

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount (and percentage) of Federal CCDF and State Matching Funds will be used to administer the program (not to exceed 5 percent): \$ 1,155,315 (5 %). (658E(c) (3), §§98.13(a), 98.52)

1.5 Administration of the Program

Does the Lead Agency directly administer and implement all services, programs and activities funded under the CCDF Act, including those described in Part 5.1 – Activities & Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care, Quality Earmarks and Set-Aside?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☒ No. If no, use the table below to **identify** the name and type of agency that delivers services and activities. (If the Lead Agency performs the task, mark “n/a” in the box under “Agency.” If more than one agency performs the task, identify all agencies in the box under “Agency,” and **indicate** in the box to the right whether each is a non-government entity.)

Service/Activity	Agency	Non-Government Entity (see Guidance for definition)	
Determines individual eligibility:			
a) TANF families	Child Care Resource & Referral Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
b) Non-TANF families	Child Care Resource & Referral Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Assists parents in locating care	Child Care Resource & Referral Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Makes the provider payment	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Quality activities	Child Care Resource & Referral Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	Child Care Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	Montana University System	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	Montana Community Colleges	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Other: Computer System Development & Maintenance	Northrop-Grumman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If the Lead Agency uses outside agencies to deliver services and activities, **describe** how the Lead Agency maintains overall control.

- The Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) of the Human and Community Services Division, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services manages the CCDF programs. The child care unit staff includes a supervisor, three child care program officers and one child care specialist. The child care unit is supported by the ECSB fiscal officer, the computer CCUBS system program officer, and a contracts specialist.

The program staff is responsible for oversight of the programs offered through Montana's Child Care & Development Fund. The state program staff develops and writes program policy and rules, provides training and technical assistance, develops and monitors the CCDF program operations and budget, prepares and submits reports to the Federal government and oversees the Montana child care system.

- The Lead Agency contracts with a variety of entities for subsidy administration and numerous quality initiatives. Contracts are awarded by the lead agency through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Contracts are awarded for a one-year period. Some of these contracts are renewable through an annual non-competitive application process for up to five years. The renewal process requires that the contractor submit a new work plan, budget, updated assurances, and documents of compliance.

The lead agency is responsible for executing and monitoring all contracts for compliance. Monitoring is conducted through a process of on-site visits that include review of computerized data files, agency files, and staff, parent and coordinating agency interviews. The ECSB has a routine monitoring schedule for all contracts, most contracts are reviewed annually, some are reviewed every other year. All contractors certify that they will comply with the state and federal requirements of the CCDF. This certification is attached to the contract document.

- The lead agency in consultation with the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council is responsible for planning and making recommendations regarding the policy and rules, system, quality, and training initiatives outlined in this plan. Together the lead agency and the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council develop, implement, maintain, and evaluate the effectiveness of the state's child care programs.
- The DPHHS, HCSD, Early Childhood Services Bureau and the DPHHS, Quality Assurance Division, Child Care Licensing program produce an annual data report regarding CCDF funded programs. This report shows progress on existing initiatives and provides an overview of program performance. This report includes performance benchmarks developed by the Department and reported to the Montana State Legislature. This report is updated annually and is available on-line at:

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/mtecfiles/childcaedatareport.pdf> Additionally, this report is included in the attachment section, as **attachment 1.5**

Current Benchmarks:

1. ECSB Benchmark: By the end of SFY 2007, Increase the number of Star providers by 10%. Goal Statement: Increase the number of child care facilities participating in the Star Quality Program.
2. ECSB Benchmark: By the end of SFY 2007, increase by 10%, the number of providers accredited by nationally recognized early childhood organizations.
3. ECSB Benchmark: By the end of SFY 2007 increase by 2% the proportion of children served through the Best Beginnings Scholarship program as compared to the number of children in families with income under 150% of the federal poverty level.
4. Practitioner Registry Level 3 Benchmark: By the end of SFY 2007 increase, by 10%, the number of caregivers at a level 3 or higher on the practitioner registry.
5. ECSB Benchmark: By the end of SFY 2007, we will increase the number of caregivers enrolled and completing the Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship program by 10%.

In addition to the above stated benchmarks, the Department shared the following goals for SFY 08 and SFY 09 during the legislative session.

1. To ensure accessibility, the goal is to maintain reimbursement rates at the 75th percentile of the market for the 12 Child Care Resource & Referral Districts.
2. To ensure that there is no child care waiting list, ECSB has a goal to increase the number of low income working families by 246 in 2008 and 344 in 2009.
3. To ensure affordability, the goal is to maintain eligibility for families at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty index by annually adjusting the program levels to the current Federal Poverty Level.

Additional benchmarks for SFY 2008 will be determined during the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Committee meeting September 26-27, 2007. Benchmarks for SFY 2009 will be addressed during the spring of 2008.

1.6 Use of Private Donated Funds

Will the Lead Agency use private funds to meet a part of the matching requirement of the CCDF pursuant to §98.53(e)(2)?

☒ Yes. If yes, are those funds:

- ☒ Donated directly to the State?
☐ Donated to a separate entity or entities designated to receive private donated funds?

How many entities are designated to receive private donated fund? _____

Provide information below for each entity:

Name:

Address:

Contact:

Type:

☐ No.

1.7 Use of State Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Expenditures for CCDF-Eligible Children

1.7.1 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement?

☐ Yes, and:

() The State assures that its level of effort in full day/full year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to §98.53(h)(1).

(__ %) Estimated percentage of the MOE requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (Not to exceed 20%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the MOE requirement, the following **describes** how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

☒ No.

1.7.2 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF Matching Fund requirement? (§98.53(h))

☐ Yes, and

(__ %) Estimated percentage of the Matching Fund requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (Not to exceed 30%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the Matching Fund requirement, the following **describes** how the State will coordinate its

Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

☒ No.

- 1.7.3 If the State answered yes to 1.7.1 or 1.7.2, the following **describes** State efforts to ensure that pre-K programs meet the needs of working parents: (§98.53(h)(2))

1.8 Improper Payments

- 1.8.1 How does the Lead Agency define improper payments?

An improper payment is a payment requested or made to a parent or provider in error.

- 1.8.2 Has your State implemented strategies to prevent, measure, identify, reduce and/or collect improper payments? (§98.60(i), §98.65, §98.67)

☒ Yes, and these strategies are:

The Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) contracts with 12 Child Care Resource & Referral agencies to administer the CCDF subsidy program to families who meet program qualifications. Families participate in regulated facilities, which are licensed or registered for public safety, and unregulated facilities with friend, neighbor or family care. All caregivers working in a licensed, registered or unregulated facility must pass both a criminal and Child Protective Services (CPS background check). Unregulated facilities complete a self attested safety requirements form. Invoices for child care benefits are only issued for qualified families who document their status of need for services provided in approved facilities from the Child Care Under the Big Sky (CCUBS) payment and licensing processing system.

The ECSB reviews a minimum of 10% of the CCR&R's cases per year, and in addition, requires each CCR&R agency to review a minimum of 10% of the cases and share these results with the ECSB. The review process includes checking that the income for the family was determined correctly, child support is followed through, and the family has established a need for child care assistance by participating in activities, which require child care such as working and attending school. These reviews ensure that a minimum of 20% of the subsidy caseload is reviewed each year. In addition, Montana provides training to the Child Care Resource & Referral agency subsidy workers once a year to instruct on processes, which involve determination of family eligibility.

If an error is identified during a review (either an overpayment or underpayment), the CCR&R agency will then complete the process to correct the error. Overpayments are collected regardless of whether the error is caused by the parent, the provider or the agency. In the case of a provider error, the correction may be accomplished by adjusting the next invoice. Any parent or provider that makes an *over claim* or has an identified overpayment, which was a result of an intentional program violation (IPV) would be assessed an additional payment penalty amount. For the first IPV, an additional 10% penalty is added to the overpayment or taken away from the over claim. For the 2nd IPV, an additional 25% penalty is added to the overpayment or taken away from the over claim. For the 3rd IPV, the parent or provider loses their ability to participate in the program for a period of seven years.

IPV tracking is performed outside of the CCUBS system on an Excel spreadsheet that tracks provider/parent data; CCR&R contact information; instance of violation (1st, 2nd or 3rd violation); amount of overpayment and penalty; and collection status. If a child care subsidy overpayment occurs because of a family, a provider or administrative error, the CCR&R eligibility specialist will contact the parent, or provider, to verify the error. The eligibility specialist will:

1. Adjust the invoice in CCUBS;
2. Notify the parent, or provider, that s/he must repay the amount of the overpayment;
3. Attempt to have the parent, or provider, sign a repayment agreement; and
4. Adjust the appropriate invoice in CCUBS.

Repayment may be accomplished in any of the following ways:

1. The parent must make a monthly payment. (A parent who is not making monthly payments on a child care overpayment is not eligible for further child care assistance).
2. An active provider's payment may be reduced on CCUBS.
3. A parent or provider may pay the total amount of the overpayment by check or money order.

Payments must be made out to DPHHS and delivered to the CCR&R. The CCR&R eligibility specialist then:

1. Credits the account on CCUBS;
2. Identifies the payment as "child care"; and
3. Adds a SSN so DPHHS accounts receivable can apply the payment correctly.

Fair Hearing Rights: Child Care Providers or parents, who have been notified that an overpayment has been discovered and that they are now responsible for the repayment of benefits issued improperly, have the right to due process including an Administrative Review and Fair Hearing.

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- ☐ No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?
- ☐ Yes, and these planned strategies are:
- ☐ No.

PART 2
DEVELOPING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

2.1 Consultation and Coordination

- 2.1.1 Lead Agencies are required to *consult* with appropriate agencies and *coordinate* with other Federal, State, local, tribal (if applicable) and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services (§98.12, §98.14(a),(b), §98.16(d)). **Indicate** the entities with which the Lead Agency has consulted or coordinated (as defined below), by checking the appropriate box(es) in the following table.

Consultation involves the meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the State Plan. At a minimum, Lead Agencies must consult with representatives of general purpose local governments (noted by the asterisk in the chart below).

Coordination involves the coordination of child care and early childhood development service delivery, including efforts to coordinate across multiple entities, both public and private (for instance, in connection with a State Early Childhood Comprehensive System (SECCS) grant or infant-toddler initiative). At a minimum, Lead Agencies must coordinate with (1) other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies responsible for providing child care and early childhood development services, (2) public health (including the agency responsible for immunizations and programs that promote children's emotional and mental health), (3) employment services / workforce development, (4) public education, (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and (6) any Indian Tribes in the State receiving CCDF funds (noted by the asterisks in the chart below).

	Consultation in Development of the Plan	Coordination with Service Delivery
Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Public health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Employment services / workforce development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
Public education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
TANF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *

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	Consultation in Development of the Plan	Coordination with Service Delivery
Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Representatives of local government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for:		
State pre-kindergarten programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head Start programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Emergency preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (See guidance):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* *Required.*

For each box checked above, (a) identify the agency providing the service and (b) describe the consultation and coordination efforts. Descriptions must be provided for any consultation or coordination required by statute or regulation.

If you have prepared an emergency preparedness plan related to your child care and early childhood development services, attach it as **Attachment 2.1.1.**

Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.

(a) The Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council (MECAC) guides the majority of consultation and coordination activities in Montana. All of the groups listed above provide representation on the MECAC. The council is comprised of members representing the following groups:

- Parents (2)
- Child Protective Services (1)
- Child Care Providers (3)
- Services for the Disabled (1)
- Child Care Resource and Referral Network (2)
- Business (1)
- Child Care Licensing and Registration (2)

- Early Childhood Career Development (1)
- Early Childhood Higher Ed. (1)
- Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Coordinator (1)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (2)
- Montana Child Care Association (1)
- Montana Association for the Education of Young Children (1)
- Head Start (2)
- County Commission (1)
- TANF/WoRC Employment and Training (3)
- Each of Montana's Tribal CCDF (7)
- State Legislator (1)
- Public Health (1)
- Office of Public Instruction (1)
- Low Income Constituency Group (1)
- Organized Labor (1)
- Physician or other applicable health professional (1)

(b) The mission of the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council:

- The Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council provides leadership and advocacy assuring access to quality early childhood and school-age care and education for all children, their families, and their communities.

The MECAC meets three times per year and is responsible for advising the Department on planning, developing, and implementing the programs funded through the CCDF. The MECAC is comprised of three committees that are responsible for advising the lead agency in the areas of (1) Program Policy, (2) Quality, and (3) Public Policy.

- The Program Policy Committee (Child Care Provider, Parent, Child Welfare Child Protective Services, Business, Tribal, Child and Adult Care Food Program, TANF/Employment and Training (WoRC), Child Care Resource and Referral, TANF/Office of Public Assistance, TANF Program Administration) provides oversight for the development of policy surrounding the child care subsidy program.

- The Quality Committee (Child Care Resource & Referral, Higher Ed, Licensing, ECSB, Child Care provider, Tribal, Disabilities program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Parent representatives) provides oversight to the lead agency regarding all Best Beginning programs.
- The Public Policy Committee (Child Care Resource & Referral, Head Start/State Collaboration, Child Care Licensing, County Commission, Head Start, Business, AFL-CIO, Tribal CCDF, Montana Association for the Education of Young Children and/or Montana Child Care Association, ECSB, state legislator) advises the lead agency on public information gathering and dissemination regarding the state plan and any legislative agenda items.

Public Health - (a) The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Family and Community Health Bureau.

(b) The Montana Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant is administered under a partnership between the Family and Community Health Bureau and the Early Childhood Services Bureau. The MECAC serves in an advisory capacity to that effort. The ECCS grant is an outgrowth of the Healthy Child Care Montana project. Both the ECCS grant coordinator and the former HCCM coordinator are members of the MECAC representing early childhood public health.

The Montana Early Childhood Comprehensive System's goal is the synchronization and improved collaboration of all existing pertinent services at the state and local level for children aged 0-5 and their families, so that whatever service provider a child accesses, all other needed services are identified and the child and their family are guided to that service.

The ECCS Grant involves a planning process that builds on existing information and infrastructure in Montana and a strategic plan to support a coordinated system of services for young children and their families in these areas:

- Medical Homes
- Mental Health and Social Emotional Development
- Early Care and Education
- Parent Education
- Family Support

Employment services / workforce development

(a) The Montana Department of Labor and Industry

(b) Collaboration between DPHHS, Early Childhood Services Bureau, the Montana Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI), the Early Childhood Career Development office at MSU-Bozeman and Western Montana College of the University of Montana resulted in the creation of a Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship. This effort was initially funded through a grant with USDOL. The initial effort resulted in the enrollment and training of over 100 Child Care Development Specialist Apprentices. The Montana Child Care Development Specialist certificate is recognized as Level 4 on the Montana Early Care and Education Career Path. It is also recognized as a level of training that is equivalent to a CDA by the Federal Head Start Bureau.

The CCDS program continues through a formal partnership with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry and the DPHHS, Early Childhood Services Bureau. The lead agency uses quality dollars to support training and professional development for individuals enrolled in the apprenticeship program. The DOLI supplies program oversight and expertise in the area of registered apprenticeship, the ECSB program specialist who is responsible for statewide early childhood training coordination efforts is also responsible for administering the CCDS program.

Public education

(a) The Montana Office of Public Instruction

(b) The lead agency under the guidance of the MECAC, works with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) in several areas:

- Out-of-School-Time care - OPI is responsible for Montana's 21st Century Learning Center grants. OPI provides grant funding and the lead agency contracts with the Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network to establish and support a network of Out-of-School Time service providers and key statewide organizations and state agencies. The Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network (MCCR&R Network) continues to administer a Mott Foundation grant and other private foundation grants to assist with this effort.
- Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development - OPI administers special education services offered through Part B of IDEA. The Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPD) advisory group became interested in early childhood professional preparation. An invitation to the early childhood specialists in Montana resulted in a cross-sector collaboration focusing on early childhood career preparation.
- Early Learning Guidelines were introduced to public school principals and administrators in the spring of 2005 and continue to be distributed for use by Kindergarten teachers.

- The lead agency continues to collaborate with OPI in seeking full time kindergarten as a key piece of the larger early childhood system. In addition to supporting this legislative initiative, the state agency is working with OPI to develop joint guidance for communities in working with families, child care providers, and after school programs to assure that children's needs are met based on development and out of school time.

TANF

(a) Department of Public Health and Human Services, Human and Community Services Division, Public Assistance Bureau.

(b) The lead agency for TANF and the lead agency for the CCDF are both located in the Human and Community Services Division of the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Communication happens on a regular basis regarding policy for TANF child care. The State transfers a significant portion of the TANF Block grant to the CCDF to ensure child care is available for low-income working families. This strategy serves as a diversion for people contemplating applying for TANF benefits. If child care assistance is available, it is more likely that parents will seek employment rather than TANF.

Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State

(a) Seven tribal organizations exist within Montana boundaries: the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, the Blackfeet Nation, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, the Crow Tribe, the Northern Cheyenne Nation, the Fort Peck Tribes, and the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boys Reservation.

(b) The MECAC has expanded to include a representative from each of the seven Indian reservations in Montana. The MECAC provides a platform to discuss early childhood coordination between tribes and the state. This forum allows all parties to discuss state/tribal coordination issues such as:

- Child care licensing/registration agreements;
- Tribal Child Care service areas;
- The implications of Tribally administered TANF programs on child care programs;
- Utilization of Early Learning Guidelines in tribal early childhood programs;
- Training integration and articulation agreements between Tribal colleges and the state university system;

- Background check processes;
- Complimentary subsidy programs and rate setting;
- Common challenges in providing quality child care and afterschool programs, and of providing care during evenings and weekends; and
- Other issues as deemed necessary for discussion.

Representatives of local government

(a) The Montana Association of County Commissioners (MaCO).

(b) MaCO selects a representative to serve on the MECAC. This person is a member of the Public Policy committee and is responsible for bringing local concerns to the council. This input in turn helps to shape the public agenda for early childhood at both the state and county levels.

State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for:

In Montana, there are four tribal TANF programs which include Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, The Blackfeet Nation, and the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boys Reservation. The regional child care resource & referral (CRR&R) program works with representatives from the tribal TANF and CCDF programs to ensure that families are receiving services in accord with formal agreements between the CRR&R and the tribal programs. Each formal arrangement is different from the other as they address the unique needs of each situation and community. Additionally, all tribal CCDF administrators receive copies of the state agencies child care policy manual including periodic updates and the updates to the market rate survey and sliding fee scale.

State pre-kindergarten programs

(a) Montana does not fund state pre-kindergarten programs. Pre-kindergarten services are provided through a network of private licensed and registered child care facilities; unlicensed private preschools, Head Start and special-education preschools funded through IDEA.

(b) The Montana Child Care Association and the Montana Association for the Education of Young children represent the interests of the "preschool community" on the MECAC. These collaborations strive to improve the overall quality of child care and preschool services offered in Montana. As a result many programs offer preschool curriculum using developmentally appropriate practice. Private child care businesses have been able to establish partnerships with Head Start and many partner with local school districts to align curriculum and support the transition from child care to Kindergarten.

The MECAC provides a forum to discuss issues such as:

- The impact of No Child Left Behind and full-time Kindergarten on private businesses;
- Professional preparation; and
- Child care business readiness so that providers are qualified to participate in potential Pre-K pilots.

Head Start programs

(a) The Head Start Association and the Head Start/State Collaboration project.

(b) The Head Start /State Collaboration office is administered through a contract with Child Care Partnerships, a local non-profit CCR&R agency. The Head Start Collaboration Project Director is housed in the Early Childhood Services Bureau office. This arrangement allows for maximum communication between the State CCDF efforts and Head Start. A recently completed project is the "*Montana Early Childhood Connections: linking standards and guidelines for best practices*" document. This publication links the Montana Early Learning Guidelines, the Head Start performance standards, the Head Start Child Outcomes, the Head Start Prism questions, the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base and Public Education Benchmarks. This document is used by a variety of early childhood professionals in the field and as a resource in the state's early childhood higher-ed courses and can be found at www.childcare.mt.gov and is included as **attachment 5.2.3A**.

Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs

(a) Child Care Plus+, the Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood, of the University of Montana

(b) Several years ago, Montana participated in the Map to Inclusion Project. This project resulted in the development of a contract to hire a state "Inclusion Coordinator," and revisions to the state "Special Needs Rate." The special needs rate is now based on costs related to care requirements. The Map to Inclusion project resulted a stronger link between Part C agencies and CCDF funded programs. The state Child Care Program Supervisor sits on the Family Support Services Council for Part C, as does Head Start.

The state Inclusion Coordinator is responsible for providing training and consultation to the twelve CCR&R early childhood trainers, parents, and child care providers. This person is responsible for reviewing and approving the state's special needs subsidy rate and accompanying care plans.

Emergency preparedness°

(a) Montana Department of Administration

(b) Emergency Action Plan Guidelines have been developed by the Department of Administration, General Services Division (GSD), in conjunction with local, state and federal emergency management resources for the State of Montana Capitol Complex. Guidelines were developed for the safety and well-being of the employees and visitors in State of Montana owned and leased buildings.

In 2005 the State of Montana (lead by DOA and DES) embarked on a program designed to develop real Continuity of Operations (COOP) capabilities for state agencies. Under this initiative, each state agency is required to develop an agency specific COOP Plan. The Early Childhood Services Bureau developed a COOP plan in August of 2006. A local disaster planning element was added to all CCR&R contracts in October of 2006. **See attachment 2.1.1** In addition to the state emergency preparedness plan, the program management plan for the 12 Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies includes criteria on break in services as follows.

Each CCR&R must have policies in place in regard to providing services or maintaining services in case of emergency evacuations, building disasters or other types of occurrences that may remove or prohibit the CCR&R staff from providing services in their current locations. Please describe the alternative location(s) where your agency would continue providing critical services, which include child care assistance and invoice payments. Include in this description available computer equipment, software, printer, phone, desk, office supplies, etc. that would be used in covering the emergency. Provide key personnel information for performance of these functions that includes:

NAME

OFFICE ADDRESS

OFFICE PHONE

E-MAIL

HOME ADDRESS

HOME PHONE

HOME E-MAIL

CELL PHONE

Other (See guidance):

In partnership with the Governor's Office, the National Governor's Association, the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, the ECSB and the Head Start State Collaboration Office initiated a School Readiness Initiative in 2006 by hosting two statewide summits, producing brochures, a web site and media ads. We plan to continue this work throughout 2007 and 2008.

- 2.1.2 State Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination. *Good Start, Grow Smart* encourages States to develop a plan for coordination across early childhood programs. **Indicate** which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts in this area. **Note: Check only ONE.**

- ☐ **Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- ☐ **Developing.** A plan is being drafted.
The draft is included as **Attachment 2.1.2.**
- ☐ **Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented.
The plan is included as **Attachment 2.1.2.**
- ☒ **Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 2.1.2.**
- ☐ **Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State planning for coordination across early childhood programs since the date of submission of the 2006-2007 State Plan.

Montana is working on the creation of a comprehensive system of early childhood services through several different means. The current Governor of Montana is committed to building a strong early childhood system and is working closely with the Early Childhood Services Bureau, the Head Start/ State Collaboration Office, and the Office of Public Instruction. This work is being supported by a grant through the National Governor's Association to support system building efforts for early childhood in Montana. By utilizing a state team which has diverse representation, systems building work focuses on coordination of resources, data sharing, governance structures, and public awareness. In addition, the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council shares responsibility for assuring that Montana's Early Childhood programs work together. They advise on all aspects of the CCDF (subsidy, quality and licensing), the Head Start State Collaboration Project, and the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Services grant. In addition to these projects, members represent the majority of the major early childhood service providers and programs that operate in the state.

The MECAC serves in an advisory capacity to the ECCS effort. This assures that the plan for coordinating early childhood programs actually results in a comprehensive system of service delivery in five areas: medical homes, mental health and social emotional development, early care and education, parent education, and family support.

Indicate whether there is an entity that is responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. Indicate the four or more early childhood programs and/or funding streams that are coordinated and describe the nature of the coordination.

Montana has made substantial progress planning for coordination across early childhood programs since the date of submission of the 2006-2007 State Plan. The Governor's appointed state team and the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council are responsible for ensuring coordination exists. The following entities are responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs.

1. **ECSB** – The CCDF serves as a foundation for the early childhood system in the state. The mission of the ECSB's Child Care Unit is to improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of child care by improving access to quality child care by offering incentives that will increase the number of providers, who are engaged in early childhood training and improving the affordability of child care for working low-income families. Partnerships are necessary to achieve this mission because of the limited nature of funding available.
2. **TANF** – The Department transfers funds from the TANF Block Grant to the CCDF. Additionally, the Public Assistance Bureau that administers TANF requested \$683,784 from the legislature to provide child care services for working caretaker relatives of children eligible for the TANF child-only grant. This program will be operated through the ECSB automated CCUBS system.
3. **CACFP** – The Early Childhood Services Bureau is home to the State's Child and Adult Care Food Program.
4. **Head Start-State Collaboration Project** – The Early Childhood Services Bureau houses the Head Start-State Collaboration Project and the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems project, the Head Start/ State Collaboration Director is also the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Coordinator.
5. **Family and Community Health Bureau** – The state ECCS grant is a joint effort between the DPHHS Family and Community Health Bureau and the Early Childhood Services Bureau. Additionally, the Division Administrator of the Human & Community Services Division, which also houses the Early Childhood Services Bureau, dedicated a portion of food stamp bonus dollars to the Family and Community Health Bureau to support oral health and the home visiting program as a support measure for the larger early childhood system building efforts.
6. **The Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network** is funded through multiple funding streams including:
 - The CCDF CCR&R/School Age targeted fund,

- The Office of Public Instruction, 21st Century Learning project,
- The Mott Foundation, and
- Other private foundation grants.

The Montana Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Network provides statewide leadership in shaping collaborations and strengthening the twelve child care resource and referral agencies for the purpose of collectively building a diverse, high quality early care and education system accessible to all Montana families. The Montana CCR&R Network actively advocates for the development of a statewide system to provide high quality, stable child care that meets the needs of children, working parents and employers. The purpose of Montana CCR&R Network is to improve coordination among all twelve CCR&R agency services and the collaboration among CCR&Rs, early childhood professional organizations, business, and policy makers. In addition, the MTCCR&R Network provides collaboration services in the area of school-age care and education. The MCCR&R Network employs a school-age program coordinator, part-time training specialist, and an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer.

7. **Higher Education** – *Western Montana College of the University of Montana* offers college level early childhood education. The 24-credit early childhood curriculum is the foundation for the CDA or CCDS certificate programs; as well as, Associates' or a Bachelors' Degrees in Early Childhood. These efforts are supported by the *Best Beginnings quality programs*, including *Merit Pay* dollars. Students are able to participate statewide through distance learning opportunities and articulation agreements within the University and Tribal college systems. Students are further supported in their education through Pell Grants and other financial aid.

Dawson Community College in Glendive provides higher education coursework in the area of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in regions where this type of course work is currently unavailable or in communities that are underserved. These services are offered in the Eastern Montana communities of Glasgow, Malta, Lewistown, Miles City, Roundup, Baker, and Sidney. They also make coursework available through any accessible Interactive Television (ITV) site in eastern Montana. DCC's Early Childhood Education coursework can lead to an: Associate of Applied Science Degree A.A.S. (60 credits); Certification (32 credits); or access to CDA credential coursework

Flathead Valley Community College continues to be highly invested in the success of the Early Childhood Education Program on both the Kalispell and the Libby campuses. Coursework has been designed to meet the Guidelines for Professional Development as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In addition, the early childhood courses are introducing students to the Montana Early Learning Guidelines, emphasizing the practical implementation of learning standards in all content areas for

young children (birth through eight). The program content continues to utilize the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base in course planning and evaluation.

Articulation agreements have been developed between programs to allow for maximum access to students who wish to continue on their higher education career path.

8. **Child Protective Services** – children in need of child care because they are in danger of abuse or neglect receive funding through the CCDF and through state CPS dollars. A hierarchy of funding exists in order to maximize the dollars available to support children in need. Beginning with SFY 2008, the Early Childhood Services Bureau will administer the CPS child care program in its entirety, utilizing state general fund, CCDF dollars, and Title IV-E dollars through a braided funding approach with the Child & Family Services Division.

Describe the results or expected results of this coordination. Discuss how these results relate to the development and implementation of the State's early learning guidelines, plans for professional development, and outcomes for children.

The results and expected results of this coordination relate to the Mission of the Early Childhood Service Bureau which is to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care in Montana. Maintaining access to high quality, affordable child care is vital to the state's families, workforce and economy. Projects such as the implementation of the State's Early Learning Guidelines and professional development system are directed to fulfilling this mission and ultimately resulting in positive outcomes for children.

Montana stays abreast of current early childhood research and promising practice. Research shows that teachers who receive specialized training in early childhood are key to the quality of care given to children. Furthermore, long term studies indicate that children, who receive high quality early education experiences, tend to have better overall outcomes. Therefore, we focus much of our attention on teacher/caregiver development. Incentives for facility improvement are linked to continual improvement in teacher/caregiver proficiency. Unfortunately, Montana is not in a position to track the individual child outcomes that occur as a result of participation in our programs due to unavailability of funding and tracking systems

In order to track the state's progress, Montana has developed benchmarks and goals for both the quality and subsidy portions of the CCDF.

Quality:

By the end of SFY 2007, increase the number of Star providers by 10%.

Increase the number of child care facilities participating in the Star Quality program by 10% in each successive year.

By the end of SFY 2007, increase by 10%, the number of providers accredited by nationally recognized early childhood organizations.

By the end of SFY 2007, increase by 10%, the number of caregivers attaining level 3 or higher on the Practitioner Registry.

By the end of SFY 2007, increase the number of caregivers enrolled and completing the CCDS apprenticeship program by 10%.

Subsidy:

By the end of SFY 2007 increase by 2% the proportion of children served through the Best Beginnings Scholarship program as compared to the number of children in families with income under 150% of the federal poverty level.

These results and subsequent goals are published annually each November and posted on the web at www.childcare.mt.gov

Results and Expected Results of the coordination efforts:

1. **The TANF** transfer enables the state to continue to meet and exceed the benchmarks set for the CCDF.
2. **The Child and Adult Care Food Program's** commitment is to help improve the health of children and adults throughout Montana. To achieve this goal, CACFP encourages child care providers to:
 - a. Offer a wide variety of nutritious foods and beverages, for optimal growth and development;
 - b. Serve iron fortified infant formula, milk with meals, and low-fat milk to appropriate age groups, providing calcium for development, growth and strong bones;
 - c. Serve foods and meats low in fat, to reduce saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol intake;
 - d. Choose and prepare foods with little salt or added sugar, to maintain a healthy body weight and reduce risk of chronic disease;
 - e. Serve foods made with enriched or whole grains, to provide fiber and maintain a healthy body weight;
 - f. Serve foods with, at least, 1 good source of vitamin A every other day, for healthy eyesight, skin, hair and brain development;
 - g. Serve foods with, at least, 1 good source of vitamin C every day, as an antioxidant, aiding in the body's absorption of iron;
 - h. Serve foods with 3 to 4 good sources of Iron daily, to carry oxygen through the body, maintain energy levels and growth of cells;

- i. Engage children in 60 minutes a day of regular physical activity, to promote overall health, psychological well-being and healthy body weight.

Additional results include:

- j. The coordination of program policy. **Example:** programs who have been disqualified for cause from the CACFP are not eligible for Best Beginnings Quality programs.
 - k. The integration of CACFP nutrition training into the Knowledge Base and Early Learning Guidelines.
 - l. The integration of CACFP training into the State's training approval system for licensing and participation in the practitioner registry.
 - m. Monthly collaboration meetings between the CACFP, the Child Care Unit, and the Child Care Licensing supervisors to address inter- program issues.
3. The **Montana Head Start/State Collaboration Office** recognizes the need to develop policies and practices that promote the collaboration and coordination essential to improving child care quality, accessibility and affordability. The expected results are:
- a. Head Start families and all low-income families will have access to high quality child care services and programs for their children.
 - b. Working families are supported by the collaboration office through the provision of information and training about partnerships and high quality services.
 - c. Head Start and Early Head Start programs improve accessibility through the provision of full day or part day services for children. They partner with child care providers and help families locate and choose appropriate full day services.
 - d. The lives of low-income children and families are positively impacted because the Collaboration Office influences state and local policy and the effective delivery of services, while linking Head Start Programs and communities through collaborative relationships.
4. The **Montana Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems** grant is in place to support an early childhood system that includes an array of quality services creating opportunities for young children to achieve full potential within their families and communities.

The expected results of the efforts surrounding the ECCS grant are:

- a. All children in Montana have a primary health care provider (medical home).
- b. All children are enrolled in public or private health insurance programs.
- c. A continuum of services that supports positive mental health and social emotional development is available to all children.
- d. All children receive services in a developmentally appropriate manner.

- e. All young children have access to high quality early care and education to support early learning.
 - f. Families receive appropriate mental health services when they need them.
 - g. Early childhood programs refer families to needed services when appropriate.
 - h. Parents and families understand the importance of providing a nurturing environment for the development of a healthy child.
 - i. Communities maintain an environment to support healthy families.
5. Collaborations with **Higher Education** result in:
- a. The availability of college level training for early childhood practitioners working in a wide variety of settings.
 - b. The ability to embed the Montana Early Childhood Knowledge Base and Early Learning Guidelines in college level coursework. (Montana's Early Learning Guidelines are a center piece of early childhood teacher education. The ELGs are used as resources in the state's early childhood higher-ed curricula.)
 - c. The availability of college level early childhood training in virtually any location in the state.
 - d. The interrelationship between the ELGs and the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base.
 - e. The availability of approved *non-college* based training surrounding the State's Early Learning Guidelines.
6. Collaboration with **Child Protective Services** results in:
- a. The ability to maximize limited fiscal resources to support children who are in danger of abuse or neglect and in need of child care.
 - b. The ability to efficiently manage child care dollars through the CCUBS computer system

Describe how the State's plan supports or will support continued coordination among the programs. Are changes anticipated in the plan?

Montana takes a systems approach to quality improvement. All of the *Best Beginnings* programs are interdependent and build upon each other. For example:

- All training must be approved through the professional development office;
- Individuals must be participating on the practitioner registry in order to be eligible for *Best Beginnings* incentive programs; (See section 5 for additional detail.)
- The MECAC coordinates the majority of early childhood initiatives in the state; (CCDF, CACFP, ECCS, HSSC, etc.) and
- The CCUBS computer system links licensing, training, contracting and eligibility for the subsidy program.

The MECAC continually reviews all program outcomes and makes recommendations to the Department regarding recommended changes.

2.2 Public Hearing Process

Describe the Statewide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan. (658D(b)(1)(C), §98.14(c)) At a minimum, the description must provide:

Date(s) of statewide notice of public hearing: May 1, 2007

Manner of notifying the public about the statewide hearing:

The notice of a child care state plan public hearing was printed in 14 major newspapers in the state. Additionally, all child care providers and interested parties were directly mailed an announcement of the hearing. A reminder card was sent to all state paid child care providers and parents the week before the hearing.

Date(s) of public hearing(s): May 21, 2007

Hearing site(s): Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, Glasgow, Glendive, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Miles City, Missoula, Sidney.

How the content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s):

The draft state plan was posted on the Internet, or made available upon request of either the state office or the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

A brief summary of the public comments from this process is included as **Attachment 2.2.**

2.3 Public-Private Partnerships

Does the Lead Agency conduct or plan to conduct activities to encourage public-private partnerships that promote private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs?

☒

Yes. If yes, **describe** these activities or planned activities, including the results or expected results.

☐

No.

1. The Child Care Resource and Referral member agencies are instrumental in creating local public-private partnerships that encourage private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs. **The MCCR&R Network and twelve member agencies** offer the following services to businesses across the state.
 - Employee child care needs assessment,
 - Business work-family self-assessment,
 - Community care resources assessment,
 - Employee child care cost-benefit analysis,
 - Review of employer child care options,
 - Information on employer tax benefits,
 - Child care referral services for employees seeking child care,
 - Child care payment assistance for low-income employees.
 - Employee child care consumer education
 - Employee referral to other community resources

To inform the private sector among other audiences, the MCCR&R Network produces and distributes an annual Montana Child Care Profile reporting state, regional and county data to describe child and working family demographics, child care needs, number of regulated child care facilities and child care slots, number of children served through the state-paid scholarship program, the economic impact of child care scholarships among other data.

Results: The efforts of the MT CCR&R Network result in improved coordination among local CCR&R agency services and improved collaboration among CCR&R, early childhood professional organizations, businesses, policy makers at the local, state and federal levels, and other members of statewide boards and councils.

2. The lead agency contracts with twelve private non-profit **Child Care Resource and Referral** (CCR&R) agencies who perform a variety of tasks, which include the following:
 - Determine eligibility for state assisted child care services;
 - Link low income families to licensed or regulated child care providers;
 - Process state paid child care provider payments;
 - Recruit new child care providers;
 - Provide orientation and continued training and technical assistance to child care providers;
 - Many sponsor the USDA/FNS Child and Adult Care Food Program for child care providers;
 - Consult with business to establish employer supported child care services;
 - Refer parent and providers to other agencies, programs and community resources;
 - Provide information about state assisted child care programs;

- Offer parenting information and public education on assessing and selecting quality child care;
- Assist in the development and promotion of policy initiatives, which expand and maintain the supply of quality child care in the local communities as well as on the state and national level.

Results: The CCR&R agencies' efforts result in readily available, high quality early childhood *services to child care providers* that include:

- New provider orientation and child care business training;
- Access to a variety of training in all Montana Early Childhood Knowledge Base areas;
- Efficient communication between child care licensing and the CCR&R; and child care providers, including technical assistance in meeting requirements and access to resources such as the *Best Beginnings* program to fund improvements required for licensing compliance;
- Access to early childhood technical assistance;
- Access to professional early childhood trainers/consultants who have attained at least a Level 6 on the Montana Early Care and Education Career Path; and
- Coordination and promotion of all other Best Beginnings programs available in Montana.

The CCR&R agencies' efforts result in readily available, high quality early childhood *services to families* that include:

- Referrals to child care providers that meet the parent's needs;
- Accurate certification for child care scholarship assistance;
- Accurate eligibility determination;
- Matching, application process assistance, approval, and orientation services if a family wishes to use a "Legally Unregistered Provider" (family, friends, and neighbors);
- Accurate case maintenance and renewal services; and
- Accurate and timely payment processing using the CCUBS system.

The CCR&R agencies' efforts result in readily available, high quality early childhood *services to communities* that include:

- Outreach to other community agencies regarding early childhood education, child care and afterschool topics;
- Local consumer education; and
- The publication of a Profile of Community Need.

3. The Department contracts with **WoRC** (Work Readiness Component) operators to help TANF families become self-sufficient through intensive case management, which includes training and employment related activities. WoRC program contractors are made up of a variety of agency types including:
 - Non-TANF State/county agencies (Job Service Centers, Board of County Commissioners)

- Other

- i. Private Non-Profit Community Action Programs/Human Resource Development Councils,
- ii. Employment and Training entities – (Career Training Institute, Montana Peaks, Career Futures, Easter Seals)
- iii. Community Colleges

The WoRC operators help families make informed decisions regarding the selection of a child care provider. WoRC case managers determine the amount of child care needed to support families while they participate in activities as part of a TANF Family Investment Agreement (FIA). They refer families to their local child care resource and referral agency who establishes the child care certification plan and assists in locating quality child care.

Results: Participation in the WoRC program results in an increased job entry rate for TANF participants, a reduction in dependence upon TANF, cash assistance, and an increase in participant's self-sufficiency.

4. The lead agency uses the **Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council** to help guide decision-making about services to families, administration of the fund, quality initiatives, and training. A wide spectrum of individuals (including business) is represented on the council (see 2.1 above for a complete listing of the MECAC membership).

Results The MECAC is responsible for informing policy making for all aspects of Montana's CCDF programs. Including:

- Providing guidance on subsidy program policy;
 - The creation, implementation and monitoring of all quality programs listed in Section 5 of this plan;
 - Legislative initiatives, either as a part of the Department's executive planning process or independent bills to support high quality early care and education in Montana; and
 - Collaborative partnerships in early care and education that are not primarily funded through the CCDF.
5. The **ECSB**, and the **Head Start-State Collaboration office** worked with **Governor Schweitzer's office** to obtain two grants from the **National Governor's Association, Center for Best Practices**. Montana sponsored two summits on School Readiness.
 - Summit #1: In June of 2006, fourteen (14) community teams and one state-level team convened in Helena to identify ways to coordinate early childhood services that could lead to better policies for young children. During the summit the teams were provided exceptional educational opportunities addressing the ready child equation, Ready Families + Ready Communities + Ready Services + Ready Schools = Children Ready to Learn. They were also

provided time to reflect on current activities occurring in their local communities and given time to plan their next steps. Community teams are made up of a variety of stakeholders including parents, business leaders, school and health personnel, child care programs, Head Start, local, private non-profit agencies, city and county officials.

Consistent themes emerged for future consideration and action: the need for increased public awareness about the importance of child development and demand for professional development and training for parents, staff, and community leadership.

- Summit #2: A by-product of the community-based summit was a partnership with the Governor, the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation and the National Governor's Association (NGA) to further the conversation on early childhood and workforce. A Business Leader's Summit on School Readiness was held in October 2006. Nearly 75 business leaders were joined by state leaders and representatives from the community teams to learn about the strong connection between quality education and economic success.

Montana will continue to use the Ready Child Equation and provide opportunities for consistent community involvement and activities relating to School Readiness.

1. The ECSB is creating a statewide information campaign about early childhood and school readiness.
2. The state will continue to work with the NGA focusing on governance, data and state-wide planning.
3. The Governor's Office will continue to unify its initiatives that affect young children in education and health under the title "Best Beginnings."
4. The Governor's Office will focus on the importance of full-time kindergarten as a key piece of the larger early childhood system to build a strong academic future for all Montana's children.
5. The Governor's office in partnership with the ECSB and a private foundation will complete an "economic impact report" with regard to early childhood programs and services.
6. The ECSB in collaboration with the ECCS project and the Governor's office has published a list of "Things businesses can do to support healthy child development". This list is available on the Internet at www.childcare.mt.gov

Community teams continue to work on local school readiness initiatives, and the state/local teams continue to work together to create public awareness and build a stronger linked statewide system. This is done with the support of a grant through the National Governor's Association for statewide system building. A logic model that broadly describes the efforts on systems building goals in Montana is included as **attachment 2.3**. Updates on the school readiness and systems building work can be found at www.childcare.mt.gov/schoolreadiness.jsp

PART 3
CHILD CARE SERVICES OFFERED

3.1 Description of Child Care Services

3.1.1 Certificate Payment System

Describe the overall child care certificate process, including, at a minimum:

(1) a description of the form of the certificate (98.16(k));

Montana's certificate form (invoice) is included as **Attachment 3.1.1**. A Child Care Resource & Referral Eligibility Specialist determines the family's eligibility for the child care program through the Child Care Under the Big Sky (CCUBS) computer system. The family is notified of eligibility determination by mail. If a family does not have a provider, the family may select a provider at that time.

Once the parent selects a child care provider, the CCR&R worker enters the provider information into the CCUBS system. If the child care provider is licensed, registered, or legally unregistered, provider information is available to the CCR&R worker through the licensing/registration module of the CCUBS system. Once the provider information is associated with the family, a child care certification plan is mailed to the parent and to the provider. The certification plan includes the child care provider's name, address, license information, the child(ren)'s name, age, authorized child care hours, the parent's co-payment, and the date span for the certification.

Once the child care certification plan is issued to the parent, an invoice is mailed to the provider. The invoice is pre-printed with family, child, and provider information. The invoice is mailed to the provider by the 20th of the service month. The provider fills in the hours of care for the month and signs the invoice. The invoice is returned to the CCR&R for payment processing. Payments are held for batch processing on the 5th business day of the month, and then processed each subsequent Tuesday. The provider or parent can expect to receive payment about two days following invoice processing. Also, providers may elect to make direct deposit arrangements and receive payment through electronic fund transfer.

(2) a description of how the certificate program permits parents to choose from a variety of child care settings by explaining how a parent moves from receipt of the certificate to choice of the provider; (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), 98.2, 98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2)) and

A parent may choose any licensed child care center, any registered family or group child care home, a legally unregistered child care provider (LUP) or a

legally unregistered in-home (LUI) to provide care for their children. If their current provider is none of the above, the provider may apply to become a legally unregistered provider.

Before a legally unregistered provider or legally unregistered in-home provider can receive payment for services, the prospective provider must apply at the district CCR&R agency and pass a child protective services and criminal records background check. If approved, payment is retroactive to the date the application is received in the local CCR&R agency. The provider self-certifies the facility meets health and safety requirements. Additionally, the provider must be 18 years old and must agree to attend an orientation within the first sixty days of being approved by the CCR&R.

Not every care arrangement qualifies for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. A child is NOT eligible for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship if the child is related to the child's care provider in any of the following ways:

- The child's care provider is the child's parent;
- The child's care facility is owned, entirely or in part, by the parent;
- The child's care provider is a member of the child's TANF Cash assistance household;
- The child's care provider is a member of the child's Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship eligibility household; and

If the child's care provider lives with the child, but not as a member of the child's eligibility household, the individual must qualify as a provider and be one of the following relatives:

- Aunt or Uncle
- Grandparent
- Great Grand Parent.

No other household members qualify as care givers for the purpose of receiving a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.

- (3) if the Lead Agency is also providing child care services through grants and contracts, estimate the proportion of \$98.50 services available through certificates versus grants/contracts, and explain how it ensures that parents offered child care services are given the option of receiving a child care certificate. (98.30(a) & (b)) This may be expressed in terms of dollars, number of slots, or percentages of services.

Attach a copy of your eligibility worker's manual, policy handbook, or other printed guidelines for administering the child care subsidy program as **Attachment 3.1.1**. If these materials are available on the web, the State may provide the appropriate Web site address in lieu of attaching hard copies to the Plan.

The eligibility worker's manual used by the Montana Early Childhood Services Bureau can be found at:

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ecsmanual/>.

The Administrative Rules of Montana used for child care subsidy can be found at:

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/legalresources/administrativerules/title37/armtitle37.shtml>, under Chapter 80.

Note: Eligibility worker's manuals, policy handbooks, or other printed guidelines for administering a child care subsidy program will be used for reference purposes only. Documents provided by Lead Agencies pursuant to this section will not be uniformly or comprehensively reviewed and will not be considered part of the Plan. All information required to be part of the Plan must continue to be set forth in the Plan.

3.1.2 In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency also have grants or contracts for child care slots?

☐ Yes, and the following **describes** the types of child care services, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts: (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b))

☒ No.

3.1.3 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care but may limit its use. Does the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

☒ Yes, and the limits and the reasons for those limits are: (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv))

A legally unregistered in-home provider (LUI) must meet all of the following conditions:

- Be 18 years of age, or older;
- Not be a parent or person acting in loco parentis;
- Not be included in the parent's cash assistance payment household;
- Not be included in the child care assistance household;
- Agree that the parent is the employer and is responsible for payment or that the person is an independent contractor;
- Be mentally and physically capable of providing child care that meets safety, health, and other basic child care requirements;

- Not have a substantiated report involving harm, physical or sexual abuse to children or adults;
- Agree to attend an orientation session within the sixty days of being approved for providing child care;
- Provide care to the children of one family or, if the children are from different families, may care for two or fewer children; and
- Pass criminal and child protective background checks.

In the case of a Legally Unregistered In-Home provider, all child care subsidy payments are made directly to the parent

☐ No.

3.1.4 Are child care services provided through certificates, grants and/or contracts offered throughout the State? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

☒ Yes.

☐ No, and the following are the localities (political subdivisions) and the services that are not offered:

3.2 Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

These rates are provided as **Attachment 3.2A.**

The attached payment rates were or will be effective as of July 1, 2007.

Provide a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that the attached rates are sufficient to ensure equal access to comparable child care services provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive child care assistance under the CCDF and other governmental programs. Include, at a minimum:

- The month and year when the local market rate survey(s) was completed: June 2007. (§98.43(b)(2))
- A copy of the **Market Rate Survey instrument** and a **summary of the results** of the survey are provided as **Attachment 3.2B.** At a minimum, this summary should include a description of the sample population, data source, the type of methodology used, response rate, description of analyses, and key findings (**See Guidance for additional information.**)

- Does the Lead Agency use its **current** Market Rate Survey (a survey completed within the allowable time period –10/1/05 -9/30/07) to set payment rates?

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

At what percentile of the current Market Rate Survey is the State rate ceiling set? If you do not use your current Market Rate Survey to set your rate ceilings or your percentile varies across categories of care (e.g., type of setting, region, age of children), describe and provide the range of variation in relation to your current survey. **(See Guidance for additional information.)**

As of July 1, 2007, rates are set at the 75th percentile of the June 30, 2007 Market Rate Survey.

- How the payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers based on the results of the above noted local market rate survey (i.e., describe the relationship between the attached payment rates and the market rates observed in the survey): (§98.43(b))

In June of 2007, Montana chose to bring payment rates up to the 75th percentile. As of July 1, 2007, rates are set at the 75th percentile of the June 30, 2007 Market Rate Survey. A family relying on child care scholarship can afford services among seventy-five percent of the child care providers in each CCR&R district.

- Does the Lead Agency consider any additional facts to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access? (§98.43(d))

☒ Yes. If, yes, **describe**.

Montana has chosen to conduct a Market Rate Survey on an annual basis. This comparison allows the department to determine whether families are still able to access and afford services among seventy-five percent of the providers in their area. If Montana determines that a particular district's rates have fallen below the 75th percentile, we have the option of changing rates in that area.

☐ No.

- Does the State have a tiered reimbursement system (higher rates for child care centers and family child care homes that achieve one or more levels of quality beyond basic licensing requirements)?

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe**:

Montana's Star Rating Program: Montana has chosen a three-level program that accommodates an intermediate step in quality improvement. Level one (one-star) consists of facilities that meet the requirements for a two or three year extended license, that comply with quality indicators in the area of staff training, parent involvement and child development; and level two (two-star) consists of facilities that meet the requirements for a two or three year extended license and are accredited by NAEYC, NAFCC or NSA.

Child care providers may qualify for increased subsidy rates by obtaining a one or two star rating by meeting requirements listed in the table below:

QUALITY INDICATOR	1-STAR REQUIREMENT (+ 10%)	2-STAR REQUIREMENT (+ 15%)
License Duration	2 or 3 year extended, Non-probationary license or registration	2 or 3 year extended, Non-probationary license or registration
Accreditation	Not accredited	Accredited by NAEYC, NAFCC, or NSA
Staff Training	75% of Center (50% of Group) primary care giving staff at Level 2 or higher on the Career Path	75% of Center (50% of Group) primary care giving staff at Level 2 or higher, including one full-time staff at Level 3 or higher, on the Career Path.
Developmental Plan	Plan must be satisfactory	Automatically fulfilled by accreditation
Parental Involvement Plan	Plan must be satisfactory	Automatically fulfilled by accreditation
Personnel Policies	Plan must be satisfactory	Automatically fulfilled by accreditation

One-Star provider rates are increased 10% above the base rate. Two-Star provider rates are increased 15% above the base rate.

☐ No.

3.3 Eligibility Criteria for Child Care

3.3.1 Age Eligibility

Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care?

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(Physical and mental incapacity must then be defined in Appendix 2.)
(658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

☒ Yes, and the upper age is 18.

☐ No.

Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

☒ Yes, and the upper age is 18.

☐ No.

3.3.2 Income Eligibility

Complete columns (a) and (b) in the matrix below. Complete Columns (c) and (d) **ONLY IF** the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI.

			IF APPLICABLE	
Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	Income Level, lower than 85% SMI, if used to limit eligibility	
			(c) \$/month	(d) % of SMI [Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100]
1	\$2,411	\$2,049	\$ 1,196	50%
2	\$3,153	\$2,680	\$ 1,711	54%
3	\$3,895	\$3,311	\$ 2,146	55%
4	\$4,637	\$3,941	\$ 2,581	56%
5	\$5,379	\$4,572	\$ 3,016	56%

If the Lead Agency does not use the SMI from the most current year, **indicate** the year used: 2008

If applicable, indicate the date on which the eligibility limits detailed in column (c) became or will become effective: August 1, 2007.

How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility? Describe and/or include information as **Attachment 3.3.2.** (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

Montana bases CCDF eligibility on gross family income, including all family members, yet excluding some types of income. Personal expenses are not deducted from gross income. Income exclusion may be based, in part, on the status of an individual in the household. For example, the earned income of a dependent child is excluded if the child is attending school. An income evaluation table is included as **Attachment 3.3.2.**

Additionally, the Administrative Rules of Montana require families with absent parents to verify court ordered child support income, or register with Child Support Enforcement, in an attempt to reduce the family’s child care needs.

- Is any income deducted or excluded from total family income (for instance, work or medical expenses; child support paid to, or received from, other households; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments)?

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** what type of income is deducted or excluded from total family income.

Montana excludes several types of income from the family’s gross income. A complete list of income that is excluded can be found in **Attachment 3.3.2.**

☐ No.

- Is the income of all family members included?

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, **describe** whose income is excluded for purposes of eligibility determination.

3.3.3 Eligibility Based Upon Receiving or Needing to Receive Protective Services

Does the State choose to provide child care to children in protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

Has the Lead Agency elected to waive, on a case-by-case basis, the fee and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

☒ Yes.

Children in child protective services are designated as a household of one in the child care subsidy computer system and uniquely identified; therefore, the state does not attach a co-payment requirement to these minor children.

☐ No.

☐ Not applicable. CCDF-funded child care is not provided in cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services.

Does the State choose to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities? (§§98.20(a)(3)(ii), 98.16(f)(7))

☐ Yes. (**NOTE:** This means that for CCDF purposes the State considers these children to be in protective services.)

☒ No.

3.3.4 Additional Eligibility Conditions

Has the Lead Agency established additional eligibility conditions? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

☐ Yes, and the additional eligibility conditions are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

☒ No.

3.4 Priorities for Serving Children and Families

3.4.1 Complete the table below regarding eligibility conditions and priority rules. For columns (a) through (d), check box if reply is “Yes”. Leave blank if “No”. Complete column (e) if you check column (d).

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
Eligibility Category	Guarantee subsidy	Give priority	Same priority as	Is there a time limit	How long is

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	eligibility	over other CCDF- eligible families	other CCDF- eligible families	on guarantee or priority?	time limit?
Children with special needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Children in families with very low incomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Families <u>receiving</u> Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Families transitioning from TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Families at risk of becoming dependent on TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3.4.2 **Describe** how the State prioritizes service for the following CCDF-eligible children: (a) children with special needs and (b) children in families with very low incomes. Terms must be defined in Appendix 2. (658E(c)(3)(B))

- (a) Child with Special Needs means a child who is age 18 or younger who requires additional assistance because of an emotional or physical disability and/or cognitive delay that is verified by medical records or other appropriate documentation such as written verification of the physical, emotional, or mental disability from the appropriate authority. Families of children with special needs are not placed on a waiting list, thereby guaranteeing a priority status for a child care scholarship. Child care providers are required to make a reasonable accommodation for children with special needs. If care requirements increase the cost of the care, one-time or on-going costs may be paid from the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.
- (b) Children in families with very low income: A family, whose income is at or below the TANF eligibility threshold of the 2007 federal poverty guidelines, pays a \$10.00 monthly co-payment. Higher co-payments are a product of the family's Non-TANF gross monthly income (GMI) multiplied by the

respective co-payment factor: $\text{Monthly Co-payment} = \text{GMI} \times \text{Percentage assigned to the Income Range.}$

3.4.3 **Describe** how CCDF funds will be used to meet the needs of: (a) families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), (b) those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and (c) those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF. (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4))

- (a) Families receiving TANF Cash are eligible for a child care subsidy, if the family makes arrangements at the Child Care Resource and Referral agency. Montana uses a process where the TANF Work Readiness Component (WoRC) Case Manager uses an electronic referral form to notify the CCR&R child care eligibility specialist that there is a need for child care for a TANF participant. This referral identifies the children in the household who require child care and the amount of child care needed so parents may complete their Employability Plans. The CCR&R enters the participant's information into CCUBS to certify care. Additionally, beginning August 1, 2007, a new program will be established for working caretaker relatives who are caring for child only TANF grant recipients. For those qualifying families, the Office of Public Assistance will conduct an initial entry screening to determine if the program is applicable. Then, a referral will be made to the CCR&R agency to assist with the child care assistance application.
- (b) When TANF is closed, the family must apply for Non-TANF Child Care assistance at the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. The CCR&R will interview the family to determine if the Fill-the-Gap policy should be applied to insure continuity of care for the children. (See Section 4.1.1 for additional information on the Fill-the-Gap policy)
- The CCR&R will notify the family and child care provider at least ten days in advance of closing the TANF child care case.
 - The CCR&R distributes a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship application to the family
 - If applicable, the CCR&R may determine the family is eligible for Fill-the-gap.
- c) Low-income working families at or below 150% of poverty are considered at-risk of becoming dependent on TANF. The Sliding Fee Scale program is designed to assist these families in gaining access to and affording quality child care. The Sliding Fee Scale program helps families pay for child care while they are working, working program and attending school, or attending high school or equivalency programs.

3.4.4 Has the Lead Agency established additional priority rules that are not reflected in the table completed for Section 3.4.1? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

☐ Yes, and the additional priority rules are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

☒ No.

3.4.5 Does the Lead Agency serve all eligible families that apply?

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

3.4.6 Does the Lead Agency maintain a waiting list?

☒ Yes. If yes, for what populations? Is the waiting list maintained at the State level? Are certain populations given priority for services, and if so, which populations? What methods are employed to keep the list current?

When the demand for Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships exceeds the resources, the Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) maintains a statewide waiting list. The Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB) will select children from the Non-TANF waiting list, based on budget projections.

As a budget management strategy, the ECSB may serve families up to a specified level of poverty. Families participating in the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship may remain in the program up to the upper limits of the sliding fee scale, subject to change reporting and re-certification policies.

CCUBS will send a notice to families of children selected from the waiting list. The family must respond within the 10-day timeframe to re-determine eligibility and secure their child care scholarship.

The CCR&R shall close the following cases:

- Families who do not respond within the 10-day timeframe.
- Families who are determined ineligible after being selected from the waiting list.

☐ No.

3.5 Sliding Fee Scale for Child Care Services

- 3.5.1 A sliding fee scale, which is used to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care, must vary based on income and the size of the family. A copy of this sliding fee scale for child care services and an explanation of how it works is provided as **Attachment 3.5.1**.

The attached fee scale was or will be effective as of August 1, 2007.

Will the Lead Agency use additional factors to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

☐ Yes, and the following **describes** any additional factors that will be used:

☒ No.

- 3.5.2 Is the sliding fee scale provided in the attachment in response to question 3.5.1 used in all parts of the State? (658E(c)(3)(B))

☒ Yes.

☐ No, and other scale(s) and their effective date(s) are provided as **Attachment 3.5.2**.

- 3.5.3 The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size, (§98.42(c)), and the poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is: \$1,431 monthly based on the 2007 FPG.

The Lead Agency must **select ONE** of these options:

- ☐ ALL families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.
- ☐ ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.
- ☒ SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee. The following describes these families:

A family receiving child protective services may not be required to pay a fee. This is determined on a case by case basis.

- 3.5.4 Does the State allow providers to charge parents the difference between the maximum reimbursement rate and their private pay rate?

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

- 3.5.5 The following is an explanation of how the copayments required by the Lead Agency's sliding fee scale(s) were determined to be affordable: (§98.43(b)(3))

Montana's Child Care Sliding Fee Scale is provided as **Attachment 3.5.1**. Montana's sliding fee scale was designed so that the co-payment matrix did not contain huge cliffs for families, either within the income categories for the scale when families' income increases so that they lose eligibility.

Families, who receive cash assistance under TANF programs and utilize child care so they may participate in required Family Investment Activities (FIA)/Employability Plan (EP), pay a ten-dollar co-payment. A ten-dollar co-payment also applies to non-TANF families whose incomes are below the TANF eligibility threshold.

Families above the TANF eligibility threshold pay co-payments ranging between 1% and 14% of their gross monthly income (GMI). The percentage of their gross monthly income (GMI) increases as they approach 150% of the FPG. Using the 2006 FPG, for every five percent increase of GMI, co-payment rates increase one percent. At the upper end of the scale, 14% of the GMI approaches the average cost of subsidy (\$ 531.58 mo) for a family of four. Percentages will be recalculated using the 2007 FPG and sliding fee scale once the scale is effective in August 2007.

For example, using the 2006 FPG and Sliding Fee Scale; this will be refigured upon implementation of 2007 FPG and Sliding Fee Scale: A single parent family with one child, whose GMI is 150% of the 2006 FPG, will pay 18.5% of their GMI in child care costs if they do not have assistance. A two-parent family with one child will pay 14.7% of their GMI. The higher co-payment at the upper limit of the sliding fee scale minimizes the cliff that families experience when leaving the program.

Currently 80% of the families who participate in the Montana Sliding Fee Scale program pay 7% or less of their GMI as a child care co-payment. Furthermore, 61% of the families who participate in the Montana Sliding Fee Scale program pay 3% or less of their GMI as a childcare co-payment. In contrast, only 3.5% of the families pay a co-payment of 14% of their GMI.

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PART 4

PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Application Process / Parental Choice

4.1.1 **Describe** the process for a family to apply for and receive child care services (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a) through (e)). At minimum, the description should include:

- How parents are informed of the availability of child care services and about child care options

Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies are responsible for assisting families in choosing and locating child care that meets their needs. No fee may be charged for a basic referral to low-income families who qualify for assistance or families participating in the state's TANF cash assistance program. A basic referral listing will include the following:

- Program/provider name;
- Location (actual address is optional);
- Telephone number;
- Age range of children;
- Facility type;
- Days/hours of business; and
- The CCR&R Network Disclaimer.

Consumer education materials must be included in a basic referral. These materials include:

- Information on choosing quality child care;
- CCR&R agency services;
- Child development information tailored to the family; and
- State-paid child care assistance information.

Information regarding the child care assistance program is included in every referral packet. The CCR&R referral specialist may also consult with parents seeking child care. During this time the referral specialist will review a brochure concerning the sliding fee scale and complete a cursory assessment to determine if the family may be eligible. If it appears that the family is eligible, the CCR&R referral specialist would direct the family to talk to an eligibility specialist in order to complete an application for the child care assistance program.

Brochures concerning the child care assistance program are available at a variety of other human service offices including the local TANF and WoRC program offices. These brochures are also available for local child care providers to use with parents when they become aware that a child may be eligible for assistance.

- Where/how applications are made

Applications for child care assistance are available at all of the CCR&R and TANF/WoRC program offices. A family may apply for child care assistance in person, by mail, or by fax through one of the Child Care Resource & Referral agencies within the state. Applicants must complete the application, provide necessary eligibility documentation; and submit the application to the CCR&R for processing. The child care assistance eligibility begin-date is the date the completed application is received in the CCR&R office and demonstrates eligibility, including the need for child care, due to the parent's activity hours.

- What documentation parents must provide

Parents must provide appropriate document to determine their monthly gross income. This includes, but is not limited to, two-month's worth of pay stubs and an employer signed work verification form. If there is an absent parent from the household, the applicant must supply verification of being in-compliance with the Montana Child Support Enforcement Division, be receiving child support through a district court order or have good cause for not applying for child support. Montana does have a new program, effective August 1, 2007 for working caretaker relatives who are caring for a relative child receiving a child-only TANF grant. This program does not require income eligibility at this time for the household, therefore an abbreviated application and documentation process applies.

- How parents who receive TANF benefits are informed about the exception to individual penalties as described in 4.4

Families participating in the TANF program are not sanctioned due to lack of child care, as noted in section 4.4 of this plan. When child care is not available, TANF eligibility managers and parents negotiate activities that do not require child care to maintain their family investment agreement. Child care is identified as a good-cause exception for families unable to complete TANF activities. If a parent is involved in the TANF sanction process, the parent is informed in writing of the right to claim good-cause.

- Length of eligibility period including variations that relate to the services provided, e.g., through collaborations with Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies prospect a family's eligibility (150% FPL) and issue a child care certification plan for up to six months. Certification plans may be shorter if prospective eligibility determination predicts a change in the family's circumstances that affects their basic eligibility. Families are eligible

for non-TANF child care services for the entire 6-month period, until one of the following occurs:

- A family enters the TANF program.
- Household composition changes, eliminating the need for child care.
- Work hours decrease and cause a family to fall below the minimum work requirement (120 hours/month for two parent family, 60 hours/month for single parent family or 40hours/month for a single parent attending school full time).
- A teen student/parent leaves high school.
- Unemployment continues past the 30-day grace period.

Department social workers determine the need for child protective services child care and use the CCR&R services to help families locate child care providers.

- Any steps the State has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

Montana policies are designed to maintain the parent's eligibility, meet the need for additional child care, and continuity of care for children. The following policies reduce barriers and maintain eligibility for families:

- Presumptive Eligibility – If funding is available and a family's initial application indicates the family is eligible; the family may receive child care for up to 30 days, while eligibility is verified. This ensures payment to the provider while the family's eligibility is being confirmed.
- Certified Enrollment – A child with a full-time certification plans have 150 hours to use when the provider requires payment during the child's absence.
- Extending Child Care Hours – Child Care Resource and Referral agencies have the ability to issue additional benefits to cover the parent's unanticipated work or school hours, when the need is verified.
- Fill-the-Gap – allows WoRC Case managers and CCR&R Eligibility Specialists to provide a child care subsidy to a TANF family who needs child care because circumstances have changed and the child care disregard has not been prospected.
- Grace Period – A family who loses employment may continue to receive benefits for 30 days, if they agree to use the time to gain employment. This grace period allows families to maintain eligibility while providing children with continuity of care.
- Hold-the Slot – A family may pre-arrange to temporarily maintain a child's enrollment for an absence of not more than 30 days.
- Holidays – Some child care providers charge families for holidays, when children are not in attendance. Montana helps parents meet this obligation by allowing providers to claim holidays when billing for services.
- Medical Appointments – A parent who meets activity/work requirements may use child care benefits to attend medical appointments.

- Medical Emergency - When work is interrupted by a medical emergency involving the parent or a child, the parent may be able to maintain needed child care during the emergency.
- Suspending a Case – A family who temporarily loses eligibility may remain in the program for 30 days.
- Length of eligibility period including variations that relate to the services provided, e.g., through collaborations with Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs
- Any steps the State has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

Attach a copy of your parent application for the child care subsidy program. If the application is available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (application must still be attached to Plan): **attachment 4.1.1**

4.1.2 Is the application process different for families receiving TANF?

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** how the process is different:

TANF families are referred for child care assistance by their WoRC Case Manager. TANF families are required to complete a separate application, which is different from Non-TANF families. TANF families receive their child care assistance application at the local WoRC office. The TANF application informs the parent(s) of their rights and responsibilities and requires a signature to release information that is needed to set up child care.

☐ No.

4.1.3 The following is a detailed description of how the State ensures parental choice by making sure that parents are informed about their ability to choose from among family and group home care, center-based care and in-home care including faith-based providers in each of these categories.

Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies are responsible for assisting families to choose and locate childcare that meets their needs. The CCR&R Agency must maintain, and update quarterly, the NACCRRWARE database to include local childcare facilities, Head Start centers and pre-schools. NACCRRWARE is capable of handling local childcare information and producing reports on the local number of families seeking care, the number of openings, the type of care needed, provider turnover rate and other relevant data. The CCR&R Agency will conduct initial meetings with parents in order to determine families' needs and to provide information that will help parents evaluate quality of care. The following information will be provided upon request when conducting a referral:

- Types of childcare programs
- Local market rate information
- Location of child care program
- Hours of available care
- Licensing and registration requirements
- Information about transportation to childcare facilities
- Consumer education about selecting childcare
- Information about child development
- A checklist that identifies quality child care services.

Referral services and parent education will be provided as requested by DPHHS for parents who are served by the CPS child care program. Families with special needs children will be given the same array of referral services as families with typically developing children in accordance with ADA. Special care arrangements or accommodations will be worked out between the parent and provider (and family service specialist in accordance with the child's IFSP or IEP if one is available). Referral services will be available in all of the counties and rural communities of each CCR&R district, as established by the state of Montana.

- 4.1.4 Does the State conduct activities aimed at families with limited English proficiency to promote access to child care subsidies and reduce barriers to receiving subsidies and accessing child care services?

☐ Yes. If yes, **describe** these activities, including how the State overcomes language barriers with families and providers.

☒ No.

4.2 Records of Parental Complaints

The following is a detailed description of how the State maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and how it makes the information regarding such parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32))

Definitions

A person responsible for a child's welfare means the child's parent, guardian, foster parent or an adult who resides in the same home in which the child resides; a person providing care in a day care facility; an employee of a public or private residential institution, facility, home or agency; or any other person responsible for the child's welfare in a residential setting (MCA 41-3-102).

CACFP – Child and Adult Certified Food Program

CA/N – child abuse and neglect

CAPS – Child and Adult Protective Services System. This is the computer system which houses information regarding the CPS program.

- CPI – child protective information; no CPS investigation completed.
- CFS – child protective services request for services; no CPS investigation completed.
- CPS – child protective services; CPS investigation

CCL – Child Care Licensor

CCR&R – the district child care Resource and Referral agencies

CFSD -- Child and Family Services Division

CI – Centralized Intake, State of Montana hotline for child abuse and neglect reports.

CPS – child protective services

Complaint – The process by which a parent, guardian, or other interested individual reports concerns regarding licensing violations involving the care received by a child from a child care provider or caregiver.

CCUBS – Child Care Under the Big Sky. This is the computer system used by the Child Care Licensing Program and the Early Childhood Services Bureau to retain licensing, and Best Beginnings data.

Department - Department of Public Health and Human Services

Validated – The child care licensor determines that the complaint allegations occurred or are occurring or that a regulation violation occurred.

Not Validated – The child care licensor can not determine the complaint allegations occurred or a regulation violation occurred.

Types of Complaints

Law Enforcement Related: Any complaint where criminal prosecution may occur. Sudden death syndrome, deaths, abuse, sexual abuse, extreme negligence can all have criminal implications. Law enforcement may notice licensors upon investigations into day cares. It is imperative that licensing's involvement

remains secondary to law enforcement's investigation. Upon request CCLs may team with law enforcement.

Protective Service Related: A child protection (CPS) complaint refers to a complaint alleging emotional, physical or sexual harm to a child. This means that acts or omissions of a child's parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare, i.e. registered or licensed day care provider, for the child may harm or threaten to harm the normal physical or mental health or welfare of a child (§ 41-3-102 MCA.).

Licensing Related: A licensing related complaint refers to a complaint alleging regulatory violations in a day care facility. The child care licenser should review all reports and make a determination whether a licensing investigation is warranted. Questionable cases may be staffed with the Child Care Licensing Program Manager.

Child Care Program and Policy Related: a complaint alleging a day care program is operating without a registration or license.

Child-on-Child Assault Considerations: An incident of abuse on one child by another child will be referred to CPS and local law enforcement; however, QAD does have the responsibility to investigate and determine if a lack of supervision contributed to the abuse allegation (or finding upon completion of the law enforcement investigation).

**Where to
Report?**

Complaints may be reported either to the local DPHHS child care licensing office, the child protection office or to an R&R agency. Reports involving child abuse and neglect should be directed to the Centralized Intake Hotline at 1-866-820-5437.

DPHHS Action:

CPS referral CFSD is the lead investigator in all CPS complaints. When a complaint is received and there is a question whether the complaint is child protection or licensing, **it will be first treated as a child protection complaint.** The local CCL office may contact the local CSFD CPS Intake office.

The licensing program—who does not have authority to conduct CA/N investigations--will investigate the referral as it pertains to the licensing regulations. The CCL may conduct a separate investigation or it may elect to conduct a joint investigation with the CPS social worker. The child care licenser shall confer with the CFSD worker to ascertain their initial findings and if necessary use those findings to support the licensing investigative conclusions.

If CFSD/QAD elects not to conduct a joint investigation, CCL will conduct a licensing investigation after the CFSD initial investigation.

Licensing If the complaint is determined to be licensing related (and no CPS issues are identified), the CCL worker will assess that information and determine what licensing rules have potentially been violated. An investigation will be initiated

Complaint

Intake When a complaint is received by the department, staff will obtain from the caller, information about the incident and the name and phone number of both the complainant and the provider about whom they are making the complaint.

Procedure

When the CCL worker is documenting the complaint, the worker needs to follow the outline Specific of the Complaint as specified on page 10 of this policy section. The written documentation must be clear and concise and must be written in an objective, professional manner. This information is then entered into the CCUBS system as indicated in the CCUBS USER Manual, Section IV B-C.

R&R Action:

CPS concerns If the R&R receives information pertaining to the licensure of a day care facility, the R&R should encourage the caller to contact the local licenser. If the caller is unwilling to do so, then the R&R must follow the procedures identified on page 10 of this policy section.

If the R&R agency receives a complaint that is determined to be of a child protective nature, the R&R staff will immediately refer the caller to the Centralized Intake Unit (1-866-820-5437). They will not 'intake' the information

If the caller is a professional person legally mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect, (i.e., doctor, teacher, child care staff person) the R&R agency staff will inform the caller that by law the referral must be made to the Centralized Intake Unit and will give the number.

Licensing

Issues When a licensing complaint call is made to the R&R agency office, the R&R staff person shall refer the caller to the appropriate licensing office. However, the R&R can also document the issues raised by using the department's Complaint Form, which is found at www.dphhs.mt.gov/earlychildhood. The information should then be forward on to the local licensing office. Complaint referrals can be made to the licensing office by phone with a follow up in writing within 72 hours.

**On-Line
Complaint**

Complaints regarding child care facilities can now be made on line in addition to the procedures described above. Persons desiring to use this method may do so at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/qad/complaintprocedure/index.shtml>.

**Requests for
Information:**

Any person wishing to know the status of a day care facility's license or registration certificate may call the local DPHHS-QAD office or District Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

If negative licensing action has been taken against a day care facility, the public can be informed:

- That a license has been reduced to a provisional, probationary or restricted status;
- That a license has been suspended or revoked, pending the completion of a corrective action plan;
- provider's name; and/or
- provider's phone number.

Validated licensing complaints against a registered or licensed provider may be disclosed to a person requesting information on that facility. The nature of the validated complaint, (e.g. leaving child unattended, lack of supervision) may be shared but names or specific details **may not** be disclosed.

In cases when a complaint is made but is not validated, information pertaining to the nature of the allegations will not be shared.

Parent

Notification If the registration or license is placed on probationary status as a result of investigative findings, the department shall notify all parents and guardians of all children attending the facility of the status of the license/registration, the basis for the reduced status and the time period for which the license is reduced. Notification may be conducted via personal contact, written notice, or posting notice on the day care license. The certificate is required to be posted in plain view at the facility.

Confidentiality

A complaint reporter's identity is confidential. Complaint information is not to be discussed with other persons unless authorized by department policy or Montana law i.e., licensing staff, child protection workers, etc.

The CCL may reveal to the Resource and Referral (R&R) agency that an investigation is ongoing. DPHHS-QAD will notify the R&R that a license has

been reduced to provisional, probationary, restricted or suspended status pending completion of corrective action plan, or that the license has been revoked.

When a referral regarding licensing regulations is validated and the allegations do not relate to child abuse or neglect as defined in 41-3-102 MCA, the licensing worker shall inform the R&R of the validated report.

If as a result of investigative findings, the department determines that services under the Training and Technical Assistance program offered by the R&R agency are necessary, the CCL will share with the R&R staff the non-compliances found and appropriate training will be developed. This information is to be considered confidential.

CCL shall not reveal details of any case involving child abuse or neglect which results in negative licensing actions. Requests for details of licensing actions are referred to CCL Day Care Program Manager. All names of the child(ren) and the family must be deleted from the register that is available to the public.

4.3 Unlimited Access to Children in Child Care Settings

The following is a detailed description of the procedures in effect in the State for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds. (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31))

According to 37.95.115 (3) ARM: The licensee or registrant shall allow custodial and non-custodial parental access as well as access by legal guardians to the facility at any time during which child day care services are provided, unless there is a current court order preventing parent-child contact.

However, recently, personal safety issues have redefined this requirement. Under current licensing policy providers are allowed to lock the facility door as long as the door is equipped with a single action lock. The installation of this lock, however, cannot prohibit access by parents. It is the provider's responsibility if one of these approved devices are used, to adequately inform parents and make appropriate arrangements with the parents to be able to access their children at any time.

Parents are informed of their right to access their child when they apply for benefits. Parents read and initial several statements on a 'Family's Rights & Responsibilities' form, including, "I have a right to have access at any time while he/she's at child care."

4.4 Criteria or Definitions Applied by TANF Agency to Determine Inability to Obtain Child Care

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care:

NOTE: The TANF agency, not the Child Care Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record. The TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions is: The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Public Assistance Bureau.

- "appropriate child care":

The child care provider meets applicable state standards.

- "reasonable distance":

a) If the family is without either their own (or arranged) transportation, and there is no public transportation, then their home or work site must be no more than 1 mile from the child care provider.

b) If the family has their own (or arranged) transportation, their home or work site is within one-hour travel distance, one-way, from the child care provider.

- "unsuitability of informal child care":

Care that does not meet applicable state licensing standards, although it may be the parent's choice.

- "affordable child care arrangements":

The total parental (caretaker relative or person acting in loco parentis) co-payment and "above and beyond" obligation does not exceed 25% of gross family income.

PART 5
ACTIVITIES & SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF
CHILD CARE

5.1 Quality Earmarks and Set-Asides

- 5.1.1 The Child Care and Development Fund provides earmarks for infant and toddler care and school-age care and resource and referral services as well as the special earmark for quality activities. The following describes the activities; identifies the entities providing the activities; describes the expected results of the activities and, if the activities have been ongoing, the actual results of the activities. **For the infant and toddler earmark, the State must note in its description of the activities, what is the maximum age of a child who may be served with such earmarked funds (not to exceed 36 months).**

Infants and toddlers:

Montana funds five primary activities through the Infant/Toddler Earmark, targeting children 0-36 months.

1. Infant Toddler Trainer Certification:

Potential Infant Toddler trainers must first complete *the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers (WestEd)* which serves as the basic Infant/Toddler curriculum. This program is offered on a regular basis throughout the state. Instructors certified through WestEd provide the Department a training plan that includes an on-site observation component for each student's program. Montana has approximately twelve WestEd certified trainers who offer the four-module (60-hour) Montana Infant/Toddler Caregiver Education coursework.

Certified trainers are required to receive annual advanced training in Infant Toddler curriculum. This training is offered through Western Montana College of the University of Montana and is based on the latest research in the area of infant/toddler development; as well as, adult education techniques.

Results/Expected Results: As of 09/30/2006, Montana has 10 active trainers throughout the state who offer a minimum of one 60-hour Montana Infant/Toddler Caregiver Education coursework each year. .

2. Infant Toddler Caregiver Certification:

Montana has created an Infant/Toddler Caregiver certification. A child care provider certified as an infant toddler care giver must complete one of the following training requirements:

- The Infant Toddler CDA;
- The Family Child Care CDA + 30 hours of Infant/Toddler coursework;
- The complete, four-module, Montana Infant/Toddler Caregiver Education course (minimum of 60 hours of instruction);
- A Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship that includes 30-hours of Infant/Toddler coursework;
- An AA Degree in Early Childhood that includes 30 hours of Infant Toddler coursework;
- A BA Degree in Early Childhood that includes 30 hours of Infant Toddler coursework.

Results/ Expected results:

- Infant Toddler caregivers will improve the quality of care they provide to infants and toddlers up to the age of 36 months.
- As of 09/30/2006, 781 caregivers have completed the Infant/Toddler certification process. Of these, 381 are currently caring for infants and toddlers in Montana licensed/registered facilities.

3. **Infant Toddler Merit Pay program** -. Early childhood professionals who work a minimum of 15 hours a week in a registered group or family child care home or a licensed child care center may apply to participate in pre-approved infant toddler training that leads to certification as a Montana Certified Infant/Toddler Caregiver.

Applicants must also be current members of the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry. Qualifying individuals who are in the process of applying for child care licensure or registration may apply for Infant Toddler Merit Pay; however, award funds will not be released unless the licensure/registration process is completed. Infant Toddler Merit Pay will be awarded to approved applicants completing all four modules of the Montana Infant/Toddler Caregiver Education coursework, who then attain Montana Infant Toddler Caregiver Certification.

Results/Expected results:

- The quality of services provided to infants and toddlers is improved by encouraging child care providers and care givers to participate in additional training.
- Since the inception of this program in 2004, 122 caregivers have successfully completed this coursework. Montana plans to serve approximately 40 caregivers annually in this program.

4. **The Best Beginnings Certified Infant Toddler Stipend Program** is offered to help reduce the turnover of infant toddler certified caregivers in early childhood programs.
- Any Montana certified infant toddler caregiver who is working a minimum of 5 hours per day (M-F) providing direct care to infants and/or toddlers (0-36 months of age) in a licensed/registered facility may apply for the stipend program. Additionally, the certified infant toddler caregiver must be an active participant of the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry at any level on the Career Path.
 - Program participants must maintain continuous employment with the same licensed or registered child care facility for the 18-month period beginning either January 1 or July 1 to receive the total stipend of \$1,600.
 - Stipends are awarded in six-month increments and paid directly to the Montana certified infant toddler caregiver. A stipend is paid following the completion of each six-month period and must be requested within 30 days of the end of each six-month period.
 - Participants must provide direct care to infants/toddlers in the same licensed/registered child care facility for the majority of time the infants or toddlers are in attendance.

Results/Expected Results:

- Continuity of care is maximized for infants and toddlers as much as possible in child care settings.
- The Best Beginnings Certified Infant Toddler Stipend Program has issued 222 contracts to caregivers across the state since the inception of the program in 2005. Thus far, 96 Montana Certified Infant Toddler caregivers have completed the program.

5. **The Best Beginnings Infant Toddler Mini Grant Program.**

These mini grants are designed to cover cost of infant/toddler training, infant/toddler developmentally appropriate equipment, supplies, and/or meeting infant/toddler regulatory requirements. Maximum awards are \$1,500 for licensed child care centers and \$1,000 for registered group and family child care homes.

Results/Expected Results:

- The quality of care available for infants and toddlers is enhanced through the improvements supported by these grants.
- The Best Beginnings Infant Toddler Mini Grant program has awarded 155 contracts to providers across the state since the inception of the program in 2005.
- Best Beginnings funds approximately 68 Infant/Toddler Mini Grants on an annual basis.

Resource and referral services:

DPHHS contracts with the Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network to utilize earmarked funds to enhance the statewide community-based services offered by the MCCR&R Network's 12 member agencies.

The MCCR&R Network, in collaboration with the DPHHS Early Childhood Services Bureau, has targeted two priority areas of service. These are the School-Age Care Project and Network Services. In this capacity MCCR&R:

- Sponsors quarterly meetings of twelve member agency coordinators to build coordination and collaboration between CCR&R agencies, provide guidance and technical assistance;
- Builds collaboration with other statewide organizations and agencies to promote quality, availability and access to child care including DPHHS, higher education, career development and training, Early Childhood Comprehensive System, State Collaboration Office, Office of Public Instruction, other statewide early childhood professional associations, and the Office of the Governor;
- Provides training and technical assistance in NACCRRAware referral software program management, and public awareness/public will, and other professional development topics; and
- Builds public awareness of child care and school age issues, annual reporting of child care referrals, licensed child care capacity, caregiver employment, subsidy payment, school age service capacity, and other data and maintaining a website.

Results/Expected results:

- State level collaborations are strengthened between child care, health, education, and other organizations to build a diverse high quality care and education system accessible to all Montana families with children from birth through school age;
- Improvement and standardization of local child care resource and referral services is supported;
- Child care data is collected and compiled for use at the state and local level; and
- There is an increase in public awareness with regard to early childhood, child development and child care as an economic development issue.

School-age child care:

The ECSB awarded a contract for school age coordination to the Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network in FFY 2007. This contract is renewable for up to five years. Through coordination of the Montana After-School Network, MCCR&R works to improve the availability and quality of school-age care statewide. This collaboration includes:

- Statewide service provider partners representing 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Junior Achievement.
- Statewide professional association partners: PTA, Teachers' Union, School Boards Association, School Administrators' Association, Small School Alliance, CCR&R agencies, and Parks and Recreation.
- State agencies: the Office of the Governor, Montana DPHHS, Prevention Resource Center, Department of Justice, and Office of Public Instruction, and the Montana State University Early Childhood Project.

MCCR&R

- Organizes after school caregiver training events, including the Annual Montana Afterschool Conference and other state level collaboration meetings;
- Creates and distributes public outreach and awareness materials including brochures, facts sheets and a DVD;
- Activities. Conducts annual supply research and publishes After school Service Capacity Supply & Demand Map and data by state and by county;
- Produces and distributes Maps, a bi-annual printed newsletter and monthly electronic newsletters, e-mail updates to the field, and an after school website that share best practices, research, trends, curriculum, and funding sources;
- Provides training and technical assistance on school age issues to twelve CCR&R agencies and statewide organizations and agencies.

Results/Expected Results:

- The School-Age Care Project coordinates licensed and legally unlicensed school-age child care services with other local and state level after school initiatives related to the four types of school-age services: child care, school-based and school-linked programs, youth development programs and mentoring programs.

5.1.2 The law requires that not less than 4% of the CCDF be set aside for quality activities. (658E(c)(3)(B), 658G, §§98.13(a), 98.16(h), 98.51) The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount and percentage will be used for the quality activities (not including earmarked funds) during the 1-year period: October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008:

\$ 924,253 (4 %)

5.1.3 **Check** each activity the Lead Agency will undertake to improve the availability and quality of child care (include activities funded through the 4% quality set-aside as well as the special earmark for quality activities). (658D(b)(1)(D), 658E(c)(3)(B), §§98.13(a), 98.16(h))

MONTANA STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/07 – 9/30/09

Activity	Check if undertaking/will undertake	Name and type of entity providing activity	Check if this entity is a non-governmental entity?
Comprehensive consumer education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Banik Communications- Private for profit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Various ECSB grants to licensed & registered child care providers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Various ECSB grants to a variety of governmental and non-governmental entities- child care providers, CCR&Rs, Non-TANF State/County agencies, other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MSU- Early Childhood Project and ECSB; Certified Infant/Toddler Caregiver Wage Stipend- non-TANF state/county agency, university	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ECSB ELG activities and contracts for Specialized Training- such training is included in CCR&R workshop offerings throughout the state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

MONTANA STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/07 – 9/30/09

Activity	Check if undertaking/will undertake	Name and type of entity providing activity	Check if this entity is a non-governmental entity?
Activities to promote inclusive child care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U of M Child Care Plus+ The Center on Inclusion in early Childhood- non-TANF State/County agency, university.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities that increase parental choice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CCR&R agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other activities that improve the quality of child care (describe below).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CCR&R agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other activities that improve the availability of child care (describe below).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CCR&R agencies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(§98.51(a)(1) and (2))			

- 5.1.4 For each activity checked, **describe** the expected results of the activity. If you have conducted an evaluation of this activity, **describe the results**. If you have not conducted an evaluation, **describe** how you will evaluate the activities.

Comprehensive consumer education

Banik Creative Group (Other – Private For-Profit)

Montana contracts with Banik Creative Group, located in Great Falls, MT, to coordinate, develop and manage the early childhood consumer education campaign that focuses on the importance and benefits of choosing quality child care. This campaign targets families, employers and communities at large throughout Montana. The current campaign will focus on School Readiness using the Ready Child Equation. Media will include television, radio and printed brochures distributed broadly across the state to parents, providers and early childhood professionals.

Banik Creative Group designed the Early Childhood Services Bureau's website to provide information and links for families and early care and education practitioners. From the website one may access current information, forms, available training and other information related to quality early care and education. www.childcare.mt.gov

Montana will continue to utilize the following methods of providing comprehensive consumer education to families and child care providers:

- Parent counseling is provided by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.
- Information distributed through Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, local Offices of Public Assistance, WoRC program offices, and Child and Family Services offices subsidized child care.
- Licensed or registered child care providers lists are maintained on the Department of Public Health and Human Services web site and linked to www.childcare.mt.gov
- Brochures, booklets, and other written material (including the family companion to the Early Learning Guidelines) related to high quality of care are available and distributed throughout the State of Montana.
- Distribution of child care regulatory information through the child care licensing offices, Child Care Resource and Referral offices and on the Internet at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/index.shtml>
- Complaint policies and procedures are included in the child care provider handbook. This information is covered in all new provider orientation.
- Mass media such as television, radio, Internet sites, and billboards in collaboration with National child care awareness campaigns.
- Public meetings and conferencing via METNET, Montana's interactive telecommunication system.

Results: This effort results in increased public awareness regarding:

- The importance of the early years, and
- The importance of parental recognition and use of high quality child care.
- The Ready Child Equation and what families, communities, services, and schools need to do to assist children in being ready for school

Evaluation: The Consumer Education efforts are evaluated by tracking the number of radio and television spots; the number of hits on the website; the

qualitative reports from consumers regarding the campaign; the number of private and public practitioners, schools, PTAs, etc requesting brochures to distribute to their clientele.

Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards

Child Care Providers

Child Care Provider Grants - Best Beginnings offers annual grants to licensed and registered child care providers to enhance or develop quality child care programs while expanding and improving access to quality child care for low income families. These grants may be renewed on an annual basis for a period of up to three years based on performance. To be eligible to participate child care providers must be participating in the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry and have achieved a Level III or higher on the Career Path.

The maximum grant award for:

- a licensed center is \$15,000;
- a registered group child care home is \$10,000, and
- a registered family child care home is \$5,000.

Grants are awarded to providers who demonstrate a strong link to professionalism in the field of early childhood; a commitment to providing high quality care in safe and healthy environments; and a commitment to the development and retention of highly skilled and knowledgeable staff.

Results:

- There is an increase in the number of accredited facilities.
- There is increased access for low income children to high quality facilities.
- Best Beginnings funds approximately six to eight Provider Grants on an annual basis.
- There were 22 active contracts in FFY 2007. Since the program inception in 2003, 110 contracts have been issued.

Evaluation: The Provider Grants are evaluated by:

- Quarterly reports submitted;
- Annual on-site monitoring visit by the program specialist;
- National accreditation achievement.

Child Care Provider Mini Grants - Best Beginnings offers Child Care Mini Grants that are quick and easy for child care providers to apply for at any time during the year and are awarded on a quarterly basis. Licensed or registered child care

providers must be participating in the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioners Registry and can be at any level on the Career Path. These funds may be used to replace or acquire equipment, purchase developmentally appropriate toys and/or supplies, meet regulatory requirements, and to hire substitute care to enable provider and/or staff to attend trainings, conferences and/or workshops. Maximum awards are \$1,500 for licensed child care centers and \$1,000 for registered group and family child care homes.

Results:

- Improvement in the quality of services offered by a large number of providers in basic Knowledge Base areas, particularly Environmental Design, Health Safety and Nutrition, and Curriculum.
- Increased participation in the professional development system.
- Best Beginnings has awarded over 490 contracts to providers across the state since its inception in 2003.
- Best Beginnings funds approximately 95 Mini Grants on an annual basis

Evaluation: The mini grants are evaluated by:

- Submission of invoice for reimbursement;
- Track mini grants by CCR&R region through computer system

Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements

Montana does not use quality dollars for this function.

Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance

Merit Pay 1 –
Child Care Providers

The Montana Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), Merit Pay 1 program was developed with the goal of improving the quality of services provided to young children, by supporting early childhood professionals participating in early childhood/child development training and education.

Early childhood professionals must be working a minimum of 15 hours a week in:

- A registered group or family child care home,
- A licensed child care center,

Applicants must also be current members of the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry.

Qualifying individuals who are in the process of applying for child care licensure or registration may apply for Merit Pay 1; however, award funds will not be released unless the licensure/registration process is completed. (The establishment of a PV number in CCUBS provides the necessary verification.)

Merit Pay 1 will be awarded to approved applicants participating in one of two tracks:

- A 23-hour Track. (Participants completing and verifying 23 hours of pre-approved early childhood training will receive an award of \$250.00)
- A 50-hour Track. (Participants completing and verifying 50 hours of pre-approved early childhood training will receive an award of \$500.00)

Individuals may only apply for one Merit Pay program; multiple applications will be automatically denied. Additionally, applicants must indicate which Merit Pay 1 track (23-hour or 50-hour) they wish to participate in.

The Merit Pay 1 application and Plan of Study are submitted to DPHHS/ECSB for approval. Applicants are selected for participation in the Merit Pay 1 program, based upon the content and quality of their application, their priority ranking and availability of funds.

If a participant does not successfully complete the approved Plan of Study required for the Merit Pay 1, she/he will not receive the Merit Pay 1 award.

All training and education must address one or more components of the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base. The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base describes the early childhood competencies an early childhood professional must possess in order to offer high quality early care and education. Training and education may include:

1. Child Development Associate (CDA) training,
2. Workshop sessions or other non-credit bearing, early childhood training approved through the Montana Early Care & Education Career Development Training Approval System,
3. Child and Adult Care Food Program training in excess of the four hours required for participation in that program, as long as the training has been approved through the Montana Early Care & Education Career Development Training Approval System.

The eight hours of training required as a condition of licensure or registration, or to qualify to be an aid or a teacher, in a center is allowed. The hours associated with CPR/First Aid do not count toward the eight hours of mandatory licensing training and will not be counted for Merit Pay 1

Merit Pay 1 priority will be given to participants who are:

- Early childhood professionals who have not previously received the award and are participating in training that leads to completion of a credential such

as a Child Development Associate, (CDA), or accreditation through the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCCA) or the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

- Early childhood professionals who have not previously received Merit Pay 1, who have not completed a credential in early childhood education or a related field, and who are participating in training in one or more of the Montana Early Care & Education Knowledge Base content areas.
- Early childhood professionals who have previously received a Merit Pay award and are participating in training that leads to completion of a credential, such as a CDA or accreditation through the National Association of Family Child Care.
- Early childhood professionals who have not completed a credential in early childhood education or a related field and who have received Merit Pay in the past, who are completing appropriate early care and education training.
- Early childhood professionals who have completed a credential in early childhood education or a related field.

Note: A credential is defined as a Child Development Associate (CDA), accreditation, Child Care Development Specialist (CCDS) Apprenticeship, an Associates of Arts (AA) degree, a Bachelor of Arts

Results:

- Early care and education practitioners will access training above and beyond that required for licensing or registration to enhance their work with children and families.
- Best Beginnings funds approximately 195 Merit Pay One awards on an annual basis.

Evaluation: Merit Pay I is evaluated by:

- Tracking participants success rate through the state computer system (CCUBS) and Montana's Professional Development system;
- Tracking participants by each CCR&R region.

Higher Education Merit Pay –
Child Care Providers

This program was developed with the goal of improving the quality of services provided to young children, by supporting early childhood professionals who are enrolled in an early childhood/child development college based program.

Early childhood professionals must be working a minimum of 15 hours a week in:

- A registered group or family child care home,
- A licensed child care center,
- A Montana Head Start, Early Head Start or Tribal Head Start, or
- A Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Agency.

Applicants must also be current members of the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry. Qualifying individuals who are in the process of applying for child care licensure or registration may apply for Higher Ed. Merit Pay; however, award funds will not be released unless the licensure/registration process is completed.

Higher Education Merit Pay will be awarded to approved applicants participating in at least six college credits per semester. Individuals may receive this award in each of two semesters per year for an award of \$750.00 per semester and a maximum award of \$1,500.00.

To receive a Higher Education Merit Pay award, applicants must be participating in a college program that leads to a credential or degree in Early Childhood/Child Development. They may also be participating in a college program that emphasizes Early Childhood and leads to a Level IV or higher on the Montana Early Care & Education Practitioner's Registry. Applicants are selected for participation in the Higher Ed. Merit Pay program, based upon the content and quality of their application, their priority ranking and availability of funds.

Results:

- Early care and education practitioners will access training and credit bearing coursework relevant to their work with children and families.
- Best Beginnings funds approximately 75 Higher Ed. Merit Pay awards on an annual basis.

Evaluation: Higher Education Merit Pay is evaluated by:

- Tracking participants success rate through the state computer system (CCUBS) and Montana's Professional Development system;
- Tracking participants by each CCR&R region.

Specialized Training Grants

Child Care Resource and Referral, Non-TANF State/County agencies (University system, Local Health Departments, etc.), Other.

The ECSB contracts with organizations or individuals wishing to provide Specialized Training in Early Childhood Development for Early Care and Education Practitioners.

Specialized Training in Early Childhood Development, and related fields, is defined as education/training (including business training related to operation of a child care business) that:

1. leads to certification or degree;
2. advances a participant along the career path; or
3. is innovative and not currently available in a community; or

4. focuses on a special population of early care and education practitioners, or special areas of interest to such practitioners.

Examples of the types of projects funded through this grant include but are not limited to the following:

- Special child care issues and challenges in rural areas;
- Child care business practices;
- Addressing the unique needs of providers doing odd hour or part time care;
- Early childhood curriculum/curricula development;
- Building strong parent, family and community partnerships
- Inclusive practices;
- Out-of-school time (after school) programs or practices;
- Addressing health, safety, mental health and/or social emotional development topics.

Results:

- Innovative training opportunities will be identified and funded statewide; training that shows positive outcomes may be replicated in additional communities.
- Early care and education practitioners will have increased access to high quality training relating to the children and families they serve.
- High quality training for early care and education practitioners will lead to higher quality care for children and increase longevity of skilled workers in the field of early care and education.
- Best Beginnings funds approximately 5 Specialized Training grants on an annual basis.

Evaluation: The Specialized Training Grants are evaluated by:

- Quarterly reports submitted;
- Annual on-site monitoring visit by the program specialist.

Mentoring Program Grants –

Child Care Resource and Referral, Other.

Best Beginnings offers Mentoring Program Grants with a one year contract that is renewable for a second and third year. The intent of the Mentor Programs is to match experienced caregivers “mentors” with novice caregivers “protégés” to provide experience and practical support to those new or inexperienced in the early childhood field. A *Protégé Guided Journal* is currently being developed that will be piloted over the next year. The journal will assist mentors in working with their protégé’s using existing Montana systems including the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, the Montana Early Learning Guidelines, the Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program trade schedule, and infant and toddler care modules. The Protégé Journal will be introduced at the Annual Mentor Program Intensive.

Results:

- Novice early care and education practitioners will have increased opportunity to work with experienced professionals.
- Mentors become early care and education leaders in their communities.
- Mentoring leads to increased stability in employee/caregiver turnover rates.
- The guided Protégé Journal will allow for additional outcome measurements related to professional development.
- Networking opportunities will assist in developing a common framework for mentoring with opportunities to share best practices.
- Best Beginnings funds 5 Mentoring Program grants on an annual basis. These programs match approximately 50 Protégé's with experienced mentors on an annual basis.

Evaluation: The Mentoring Program Grants are evaluated by:

- Quarterly reports submitted;
- Annual on-site monitoring visit by the program specialist.
- Participation in the annual Mentor Intensive meeting.
- Over the next two years, individual protégés will be evaluated through documentation in a guided protégé journal, this is being piloted the first year.

Grants for Higher Education Coursework in the Area of Early Childhood -
Non-TANF State/County agency (Montana University System, and Community College)

Best Beginnings funding provides Higher Education in the area of Early Childhood in regions where this type of training is currently unavailable or in communities that are under served. Appropriate coursework is that which leads either to a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or to an associate's degree in early childhood or a Child Care Development Specialist Apprentice Certificate. One-year contracts are awarded which are renewable on an annual basis up to a total of four years. RFP's will be available for the 2008 FFY.

Results

- Underserved rural communities will have access to higher education that will lead to a degree or certification in early care and education.
- Non-traditional students unable to access traditional college classes will have access to credit bearing coursework in early care and education

Evaluation: The Grants for Higher Education Coursework in the Area of Early Childhood are evaluated by:

- Quarterly reports submitted;
- Annual on-site monitoring visit by the program specialist.

Child Care Provider Scholarships –

Child Care Providers (Administered through the Early Childhood Project at Montana State University)

The Montana Early Care and Education Scholarship Program offers three scholarships that are funded by Best Beginnings Quality Improvement monies. Applicants must be active on The Practitioner Registry to be eligible to receive one of these scholarships.

1. *Child Development Associate (CDA) Assessment Scholarship* - This scholarship pays for the CDA assessment fee of \$325.00 (and the renewal assessment fee of \$50). It is awarded when the candidate applies to the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. This is the last step after completing all requirements for CDA assessment. A CDA often requires up to two years of preparation time.
2. *National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation* The NAFCC accreditation process is designed for family and group home child care programs. It involves a comprehensive self-study, parent surveys, and an observer visit. The fee is \$495 if a provider is a member of the NAFCC.

Full scholarships are available for the accreditation fee (and the renewal accreditation fee) which are awarded when your accreditation materials are sent back to the NAFCC. Currently, 39 programs have received NAFCC accreditation in Montana.

3. *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation* - The NAEYC accreditation process is designed for childcare centers, preschools, school-age programs, and kindergartens. Nationally, over 6,000 programs are accredited, 28 of which are in Montana.

Results:

- Improved access to professional training,
- Increased numbers of practitioners achieving CDA credentials,
- Improved quality of early care and education,
- Improved completion rates for students enrolled in these programs, and
- Creation of a more highly qualified workforce.

Evaluation: The Child Care Provider Scholarships are evaluated by:

- Quarterly reports submitted;
- Annual on-site monitoring visit by the program specialist.

Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers

A Non-TANF State/County agency.

A well-trained and stable early childhood workforce is a key ingredient in the recipe for provision of high quality early care and education. All of the quality initiatives that Best Beginnings offers are helping to improve salaries and other compensations that are building the supply and quality of child care in our communities.

Specific programs that address salary and other compensation include:

The Certified Infant Toddler Care Giver Stipend program – Described in Section 5.1.1

The Practitioner Registry/Career Path is voluntary, but continues to grow in numbers of active participants and all Best Beginnings programs, with the exception of child care payment scholarships to families, require active participation on the registry. The Early Childhood Project's (ECP) database is under major revision in alignment with national Best Practices for core data elements, policies and procedures for all state registries that verify and track professional development of the early childhood workforce. The ECP partners with other statewide entities and national initiatives to review, improve, and enhance cross-sector professional development in Montana.

Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Program – A Child Care Development Specialist is recognized by USDOL as an apprenticeable occupation. The CCDS apprenticeship program is an organized formal system of on-the-job training under supervision of a qualified mentor at a designated early care facility, supplemented by related technical instruction in which the apprentice “learns by doing” and “earns while he or she learns”. The program includes a wage progression element so as training and experience goals are met, the participant receives a negotiated raise from their employer. Completion of this program results in certification as a Child Care Development Specialist (CCDS). Completion of this certificate affords the CCD Specialist to be recognized at Level 4 on the Montana Early Care and Education Career Path.

Results:

- Utilization of a user friendly training option whereby an experienced caregiver/mentor provides guidance and support to a novice caregiver/protégé/apprentice in a supervised on-the-job training experience.
- Increased availability of high quality training opportunities in early care and education on a statewide basis through the utilization of a respected training method especially embraced in rural Montana.
- Increased wages for participants enrolled in this program through a negotiated wage progression.
- Increased access for college level coursework in early childhood
- Improvement of the quality of the early childhood workforce.

- Best Beginnings expects to enroll and train approximately 30 CCDS apprentices on an annual basis.
- 226 that have participated/completed since the inception of this program in 2001.

Evaluation: The Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers are evaluated by:

- The *Infant Toddler Stipend program* is tracked through the Montana Child Care Computer system (CCUBS) and evaluated annually by the Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council's Quality committee;
- The *Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Program* is evaluated by the program specialist through annual on-site visits to the apprentice and his/her mentor. The program is evaluated by the joint efforts of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry and the Early Childhood Services Bureau through annual data reports which include transcripts of participant's college coursework.

Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development

A Non-TANF State/County agency.

Early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts development are addressed in the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, which has been revised and updated to align with Montana's Early Learning Guidelines. Montana has written its Early Learning Guidelines to include all curriculum areas, which include literacy, pre-reading, and math concepts development. *Montana Early Childhood Connections: linking standards and guidelines for best practices*; has been developed in collaboration with the Head Start State Collaboration office. This "cross-walking" tool addresses how the Montana Early Learning Guidelines align with Head Start Performance Standards, Head Start Child Outcomes, The Head Start Prism instrument, the Montana Early Care & Education Knowledge Base, and the Montana K-12 Standards.

Family Fun Activities; a companion to the Montana Early Learning Guidelines has been developed to assist families in supporting the developmental concepts in the child's home setting.

Training opportunities relating to children's curriculum areas are delivered through Montana's training system for quality early childhood education. Montana early childhood higher education options include specific curriculum course work.

Results

- Increased caregiver knowledge and competence in the Knowledge Base area of curriculum.

- Increased caregiver knowledge and competence in the Early Learning Guideline areas of: Language and Literacy and Mathematics and Numeracy.
- Increased family knowledge and competence in the areas of: Language and Literacy and Mathematics and Numeracy.

Evaluation: Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development has no formal evaluation at this time. Over a period of time Montana hopes to increase the number of children who are ready to learn when entering kindergarten through the activities listed above. In the next year, we plan to gather more quantitative data regarding dissemination, distribution, and use in programs working with families.

Activities to promote inclusive child care

A Non-TANF State/County agency (University System)

Best Beginnings has contracted with Child Care Plus+, the Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood at the University of Montana for a state “*Child Care Inclusion Coordinator*.” Funding has created an on-going statewide initiative to assist families and child care providers in creating inclusive environments. This project is contracted yearly for a period of up to five-years. Presently, the statewide inclusion coordinator has 36 active cases that she is overseeing in coordination with the Child Care Resource & Referral agency involved with the individual case.

Results:

- Increased access to quality child care for children with disabilities who are participants in the Child Care Scholarship Program.
- Increased ability for child care providers to include these children in their programs.

Evaluation:

- Quarterly reports submitted;
- Annual on-site monitoring visit by the program specialist.

Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children

Montana has not been able to specifically fund activities related to *Healthy Child Care Montana* since the Healthy Child Care America grant was converted to the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems planning grant.

However, training events related to health and safety may be supported at the local level through *Specialized Training* grant funds. (See a detailed description of this program above.) The training events provided offer non-credit bearing classes for early care and education practitioners that include social emotional

development of young children. Social emotional development of young children is a key component in the infant toddler courses available statewide

Results:

- Early Care and education practitioners will have access to training that specifically addresses health and safety in early care facilities.
- Training regarding social emotional development of young children is recognized as a key component of children's development.

Evaluation: Training events for this activity would be evaluated through the programs listed above.

Activities that increase parental choice

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

The ECSB funds the twelve Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to provide services to families, services to providers, and services to communities. “*Services to Communities*” is the only portion of the CCR&R contracts funded with “quality” dollars from the CCDF.

Although **not funded** through quality dollars, parent consultation regarding choosing quality child care and the types of legally operating child care options, is an activity conducted by Montana's CCR&R agencies. CCR&R agencies inform parents about child care options including unlicensed kith and kin care. CCR&R agencies provide background check services for families that wish to use Montana's Child Care Scholarship program to pay for these services. CCR&R caseworkers help parents brainstorm options regarding informal care, particularly when the parents work non-standard hours or variable shifts as this is difficult to accommodate in regulated care.

Additional information regarding the Child Care Resource and Referral *Services to Families* may be found in Section 2.3.

Other activities that improve the quality of child care (describe below).

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies –*Services to Communities*. CCR&R agencies are funded using quality dollars to provide community education and outreach within their regions. CCR&R representatives participate in a wide range of community task forces focused on coordinating and strengthening services to children and families. CCR&R representatives are seen as experts in early childhood development and are called upon to share information to inform community service planning, as presenters in parenting courses and college courses.

Results:

- CCR&R agencies act as a link between schools and early childhood professionals to help early childhood professionals understand the transition to school so they can better prepare children and to help teachers understand the nature of early childhood care and education.
- CCR&R agencies are active in regional school readiness task forces particularly as fulltime kindergarten is being considered by the Legislature. There are many issues regarding out-of-school time for kindergarteners that will need to be addressed if this transition occurs.
- CCR&R agencies compile and disseminate information regarding local child care supply and demand.
- CCR&R agencies provide information on the economic impact of child care in each county to inform business leaders and elected officials.

Evaluation: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies – *Services to Communities* is evaluated through:

- Bi-annual on-site visits to each Child Care Resource and Referral agency;
- Quarterly Reports.

Other activities that improve the availability of child care (describe below).

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

The ECSB funds the twelve Child Care Resource and Referral agencies to provide services to families, services to providers, and services to communities. “*Services to Communities*” is the only portion of the CCR&R contracts funded with “quality” dollars from the CCDF.

Although **not funded** through quality dollars, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies provide services to providers that support the start-up, expansion and improvement of new and existing programs.

Additional information regarding the Child Care Resource and Referral *Services to Providers* may be found in Section 2.3.

5.2 Good Start, Grow Smart Planning and Development

This section of the Plan relates to the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative which is envisioned as a Federal-State partnership that creates linkages between CCDF, including funds set-aside for quality, and State public and private efforts to promote early learning. In this section, each Lead Agency is asked to assess its State's progress toward developing voluntary guidelines on language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts and a plan for the education and training of child care providers. The third component of the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, planning for coordination across at least four early childhood programs and funding streams, was addressed in Section 2.1.2.

5.2.1 Status of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop, implement, or revise research-based early learning guidelines (content standards) for three to five year-olds. **NOTE: Check only one box to best describe the status of your State's three-to-five-year-old guidelines.**

- ☐ **Planning.** The State is planning for the development of early learning guidelines. Expected date of plan completion: _____
- ☐ **Developing.** The State is in the process of developing early learning guidelines. Expected date of completion: _____
- ☐ **Developed.** The State has approved the early learning guidelines, but has not yet developed or initiated an implementation plan. The early learning guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1**.
- ☒ **Implementing.** In addition to having developed early learning guidelines, the State has embarked on implementation efforts which may include dissemination, training or embedding guidelines in the professional development system. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1**.
- ☐ **Revising.** The State has previously developed early learning guidelines and is now revising those guidelines. The guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.1**.
- ☐ **Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in developing, implementing, or revising early learning guidelines since the date of submission of the 2006-2007 State Plan.

Montana's Early Learning Guidelines are currently being distributed and disseminated throughout the State of Montana by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, Head Start programs, public and private preschool as well as being used in public school systems kindergarten programs. Montana's Early Learning Guidelines are used as resource document for early childhood courses in higher education institutes across the state. A Trainer's Tool Kit has been developed and distributed to the Montana Child Care Resource and Referral

Agency trainers. The materials and outlines for training related to the Montana Early Learning Guidelines have been made available to others wanting to use them. A collection of ideas and “Best Practices” has been shared to help others learn from each other and connect with each other as they use the document.

A family companion to the Montana Early Learning Guidelines was published this year and is currently being distributed to families with children in Montana State licensed or registered child care facilities. This document is available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website, www.childcare.mt.gov and is included as **attachment 5.2.3.b**. Head Start programs have access to the documents and other agencies are using them also. Distribution is being linked to training opportunities so that use with families is optimized and service providers understand how the Montana Early Learning Guidelines link early childhood training systems in our state.

If developed, are the guidelines aligned with K-12 content standards or other standards (e.g., Head Start Child Outcomes, State Performance Standards)?

☒ Yes. If yes, **name standards**.

Montana Early Childhood Connections: linking standards and guidelines for best practices; aligns Montana Early Learning Guidelines with Head Start Performance Standards, Head Start Child Outcomes, Head Start PRISM questions, Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, and Montana Public Education Benchmarks. This document is available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website, www.childcare.mt.gov and is included as **attachment 5.2.3.a**.

☐ No.

If developed, are the guidelines aligned with early childhood curricula?

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe**.

The Montana Early Guidelines align with developmentally appropriate practice as they support each developmental domain. The guidelines are designed to support practitioners as they individualize curriculum for the children in their care as they understand what children need to know, understand, and be able to do when they enter kindergarten. The Montana Early Learning Guidelines align with Developmentally Appropriate Practice. In addition the Montana Early Learning Guidelines

are utilized as part of higher education curricula in the University of Montana-Western early childhood courses, and at Dawson Community College, Flathead Valley Community College, and the Salish Kootenai College.

☐ No.

Have guidelines been developed for children in the following age groups (check if guidelines have been developed):

- ☐ Birth to three. Guidelines are included as Attachment 5.2.1
☐ Birth to five. Guidelines are included as Attachment 5.2.1
☐ Five years or older. Guidelines are included as Attachment 5.2.1

Efforts to develop early learning guidelines for children that may differ from those addressed in *Good Start, Grow Smart* (i.e., children birth to three or older than five) may be described here.

During SFY 2008, Montana will begin work on Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, for ages 0-3. It is expected this work will continue into SFY 09 and guidelines will be published in SFY 2009 as well.

If any of your guidelines are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (guidelines must still be attached to Plan):

<http://www.montana.edu/ecp/MTearlylearningguidelines.doc>

5.2.2 Domains of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Do the guidelines for children three-to-five-years-old address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts?

☒ Yes.

Montana Early Learning Guidelines address all domains of child development and align with Developmentally Appropriate Practice.

☐ No.

Do the guidelines for children three-to-five-years-old address domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*, such as social/emotional, cognitive, physical, health, creative arts, or other domains?

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe**.

In addition to the required Good Start, Grow Smart domains, the Montana Early Learning Guidelines include the domains of Creative Arts, Physical Development and Health, Science, Social/Emotional, and Social Studies.

☐ No.

5.2.3 **Implementation of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. Indicate** the strategies the State used or expects to use in **implementing** its early learning guidelines.

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Disseminating materials to practitioners and families
- ☒ Developing training curricula
- ☒ Partnering with other training entities to deliver training
- ☒ Aligning early learning guidelines with licensing, core competencies, and/or quality rating systems
- ☐ Other. Describe:

Indicate the stakeholders that are (or expect to be) actively supporting the implementation of early learning guidelines.	Indicate the programs that mandate or require the use of early learning guidelines.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publicly funded (or subsidized) child care	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicly funded (or subsidized) child care
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Head Start	<input type="checkbox"/> Head Start
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education/Public pre-k	<input type="checkbox"/> Education/Public pre-k
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Intervention
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child Care Resource and Referral	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Resource and Referral
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent Associations	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent Associations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other. Describe: Montana Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program, Maternal and Child Health Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Describe:

How are (or will) cultural, linguistic and individual variations (be) acknowledged in implementation?

All components of the Montana Early Learning Guidelines are culturally appropriate for Montana's children and their families and were designed to

represent the unique culture of our rural state. Graphics, photographs, and scenarios depict children and settings from Montana.

How are (or will) the diversity of child care settings (be) acknowledged in implementation?

The Montana Early Learning Guidelines include scenarios for each guideline in every domain that reflects a wide variety of settings that children in our state are cared for, including kith and kin care as well as public and private preschool and kindergarten.

Materials developed to support implementation of the guidelines are included as **Attachment 5.2.3**. If these are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address:

- Montana Early Childhood Connections: linking standards and guidelines for best practices. This document is available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website, www.childcare.mt.gov, and is included as **attachment 5.2.3.a**
- Montana Early Learning Guidelines Family Fun Activities: for children ages 3 – 5 and their families. . This document is available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website, www.childcare.mt.gov, and is included as **attachment 5.2.3.b**

5.2.4 Assessment of Voluntary Early Learning Guidelines. As applicable, **describe** the State's plan for:

(a) Validating the content of the early learning guidelines

The Montana Early Guidelines were written based upon current research regarding best practices in supporting children's development and learning from three to five years of age.

(b) Assessing the effectiveness and/or implementation of the guidelines

Our current assessment of effectiveness and implementation is based upon collecting information of how the guidelines are being used in a wide variety of early care and education programs with novice practitioners to seasoned professionals. We have documented the coordination of implementation efforts between higher education systems, child care resource and referral agencies, Head Start and other preschool programs and public and private kindergarten.

- (c) Assessing the progress of children using measures aligned with the guidelines Montana has not implemented diagnostic assessments to screen children. The Montana Early Learning Guidelines specifically state that they should **not** be used:
- a. as a diagnostic tool to assess a child's development;
 - b. to "push down" curriculum meant for older children to young children;
 - c. as a screening tool to determine school readiness and limit access to kindergarten;
 - d. to increase pressure on children and the adults who care for and educate them;
 - e. to justify inappropriate assessment packages;
 - f. to place increased importance on academics and move adults away from the power of play;
 - g. to suggest that preschool is more valuable than the home experience;
 - h. to evaluate early care and education programs or parenting skills;
 - i. to mandate specific curriculum or practices or serve as rules and regulations for programs to follow;
 - j. to highlight differences between the core philosophies of early childhood and elementary education.

(d) Aligning the guidelines with accountability initiatives

Professional development plans have been updated to include the new companion documents to the Montana Early Learning Guidelines. Current professional development plans align the guidelines with the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, the Montana Early Childhood Connections: linking standards and guidelines for best practices document and the Montana Early Learning Guidelines Family Fun Activities document. The guidelines are the foundation and common thread between training and education systems related to children ages 3 -5 years. These documents are available on the Early Childhood Services Bureau website, www.childcare.mt.gov, and are included as **attachment 5.2.3.a. and 5.2.3.b**

Written reports of these efforts are included as **Attachment 5.2.4**. If these are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address (reports must still be attached to Plan): www.childcare.mt.gov

Montana is currently collecting qualitative information that reflects the use of the Montana Early Learning Guidelines in our training and education systems however do not have a formalized report. We recognize the need for data collection and are developing a system to collect and assess data related to the use of the Montana Early Learning Guideline documents. It is our goal to have these instruments developed with initial outcomes reflected over the next year.

5.2.5 State Plans for Professional Development. **Indicate** which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop a professional development plan for early childhood providers that includes all the primary sectors: child care, Head Start, and public education. **NOTE: Check ONLY ONE box to best describe the status of your State's professional development plan.**

- ☐ **Planning.** **Indicate** whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the entities involved in the planning process, time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- ☐ **Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft or planning documents are included as **Attachment 5.2.5.**
- ☐ **Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 5.2.5.**
- ☐ **Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented, or has been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment 5.2.5.**
- ☐ **Revising.** The State previously developed a professional development plan and is now revising that plan, or has revised it since submitting the 06-07 State Plan. The revisions or the revised plan are included as **Attachment 5.2.5.**
- ☒ **Other (describe):**

Montana's Early Care and education Career Development program's database is being rebuilt to align with Best Practices established by the National Registry Alliance and the Data 4 Mapping Project over the past two years. Security, core data elements, standardized data collection and processing and verification procedures are being integrated into the system. The ECP continues to upgrade and refine career development in response to state plans and goals, the workforce, national trends and new directions. Links to SECCS and ECPPD efforts strengthen professional development systems across sectors and Montana's work in this area is dynamic and focused.

Describe the progress made by the State in planning, developing, implementing, or revising the professional development plan since the date of submission of the 2006-2007 State Plan.

Montana's Early Care and Education Career Development program has been fully implemented since the fall of 1999 after a four year planning and development phase. All components of the program have undergone changes over the years to

improve services, increase the use of data for meaningful future planning, upgrade the quality of customer service to professionals, meet needs of practitioners and agency/organization partners and strengthen linkages to other statewide initiatives.

The program undergoes biannual reviews and input from the Statewide Early Care and Education Advisory Board which oversees the work plan.

The Early Childhood Project at Montana State University-Bozeman coordinates and manages career development with a variety of strong statewide partnerships. The career development program is part of the Best Beginnings Quality Child Care Initiatives in Montana.

Major goals for the past year have been to:

- Improve and upgrade the quality and efficiency of the Training Approval System;
- Expand the knowledge, skills and professional development of trainers statewide;
- Expand participation on The Practitioner Registry/Career Path (Sept 05-October 06 reflects an 11% increase in active registry participation.)
- Coordinate program accreditation and CDA assessment scholarships;
- Market Career Development;
- Provide leadership and planning to move Montana and national early care and education career development forward;
- Coordinate data collection and analysis with partners to improve informed decision making about the direction of early care and education career development and services in Montana;
- Collaborate with partners to maximize career development services, training impacts, and workforce status in early care and education statewide, regionally, and nationally

If your State has developed a plan for professional development, does the plan include (**Check EITHER yes or no for each item**):

	Yes	No
Specific goals or desired outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A link to Early Learning Guidelines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuum of training and education to form a career path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation from one type of training to the next	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of trainers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of training content	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A system to track practitioners' training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Credentials – State for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors' credential, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For each **Yes** response, **reference** the page(s) in the plan and briefly **describe**.

Specific goals or desired outcomes:

An annual work plan is submitted by the Early Childhood Project to continue the evolution and continuous improvement and upgrades of Montana's Early Care and Education Career Development program in conjunction with all key partners through biannual input from the MT Career Development Advisory Board. Regional and national trends are utilized to inform this work plan through alliances with other state registries and professional development systems.

Link to Early Learning Guidelines: All training is approved based upon Guiding Principles for Training Approval, the Knowledge Base, and MT's ELGs for training events that are offered in the Curriculum content area. The ELGs and the Knowledge Base are complementary documents that are used in tandem across training and education systems for practitioners from entry level to higher education.

Continuum of training to form a career path: The MT Career Path provides a framework for practitioners to increase their levels of professional development from Pre-Professional (high school students and beginning caregivers with minimal training or experience) through a doctorate level with an emphasis in early childhood related studies. The nine levels include reasonable steps of increased training, formal education and professionalism. It reflects both informal and formal paths to a CDA credential at Levels 3 and 4, in addition to the Child Development Specialist Apprenticeship being recognized at Level 4. The MT Career Path has been revised once since its implementation in 1999 with the launch of The Practitioner Registry to accommodate input from the field. Unrelated four year degrees with a minimum of 20 additional semester credits in early childhood education were added as another method to achieve a Level 5.

For each level on the Career Path, incentives through opportunities to apply for Best Beginnings quality programs are available.

The Knowledge Base defines for trainers, training sponsors, and practitioners what practitioners need to know, be able to do and understand to provide high quality early care and education for children and families. The nine key content areas revolve around the core content area of Personal Dispositions. Cultural and Developmental Diversity are embedded in each of the other Knowledge Base

content areas, which also align with national core competencies in the field. We have not developed specific core competencies for sub-categories of care such as school-age or infant/ toddler, but have specifically addressed the knowledge base essential across sectors of care.

Articulation from one type of training to the next: Approved informal training links to higher levels on the Career Path which leads to formal (credit bearing) education at Levels 4 and beyond. The core early childhood education curriculum in higher education is required for both the CDA credential and the CCDS apprenticeship certificate at Level 4 and includes 24 credits. This course of study is available throughout the state through the University of Montana Western outreach sites and through articulation agreements with various community and tribal colleges. Much of this work has been accomplished through the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium. Some approved training series are also offered for credit, such as the Infant Toddler Caregiver course and may be utilized as electives in the associate and/or bachelor degree programs offered through UMW and other MT University System campuses or through articulation agreements. Additionally, both MSU-Bozeman and UMW offer the Early Childhood Permissive Special Competency (minor) to be added to an Elementary (K- 8) Teaching Certificate through OPI.

Various Merit Pay Programs offer monetary incentives to participate in approved training, intermediate level training offered in a series format, and credit bearing courses that lead to a credential or degree.

Quality assurance through approval of trainers:* The Trainer Directory is housed at the ECP and on their website and is designed to link trainers to sponsors of training statewide in Knowledge Base content areas. Trainers must apply to be listed and are then invited (and CCR & R trainers are required) to complete MT's Adult Learning Training that includes three six-hour sessions (Adult Learning I, II and III). Adult Learning III was developed and offered for the first time in the past year. It specifically addresses individualized technical assistance as a method of training. These courses are offered at least annually in various geographic locations across the state. All trainers on the directory also receive a bimonthly *Training Solutions* E-News via a list serv that examines training issues in depth.

Quality assurance through approval of training content: The Training Approval System requires application, review, and evaluation of all informal (non-credit bearing) training for practitioners and is coordinated through the career development program at the Early Childhood Project. All approved training open to the public (not approved in-service training) is then posted on the Statewide Training Calendar on the ECP website.

A system to track practitioners' training:

The Training Approval System links participants at specific events through an interface with the state child care computer system for licensing and quality

initiatives (Merit Pay, Tiered Reimbursement, Provider Grants, Infant Toddler Stipends, etc.). This allows state program monitors, child care licensors, career development staff, and practitioners to access career path levels and training records via the web. All training and education records are verified in Montana through the career development office.

Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness: All approved training events meet quality criteria and must be relevant to one or more of the Knowledge Base content areas. An evaluation form is part of the Training Approval Packet sent to sponsors for each approved event. If the training is provided through an ECSB contractor, evaluations are required. The majority of non-credit training in MT is offered through the statewide CCR & R Network agencies which are monitored by the ECSB.

Many training series such as the Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers and the UMW Early Childhood Core have “lab” components that require students to complete practicum hours working in early childhood programs as part of their coursework or training. This promotes individualized, transformational learning where classroom instruction and theory are put into practice, coupled with on-site instructor observations and conferences.

State Credentials – State for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors’ credential, etc.): Montana has a Certificate for Infant Toddler Caregivers (Section 5.1.1) and a certificate for the Child Development Specialist earned through the Apprenticeship Program (Section 5.1.4). The CDA credential is also recognized on the MT Career Path, as are associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s and PhD or Ed.D degrees.

Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers: Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are responsible for facilitating child care by family, friends, and neighbors if a parent requests this type of care. These caregivers are generally approved as Legally Unregistered Providers (LUP) or Legally Unregistered In-Home Providers (LUI). These caregivers are required to attend a New Provider Orientation delivered by all 12 regional CCR&R agencies. These caregivers are afforded access to all of the training events offered through the CCR & R agency, the quarterly CCR & R newsletters, and the CCR & R resource libraries.

For each **No** response, **indicate** any plans the Lead Agency has to incorporate these components.

Are the professional development opportunities described in the plan available:

MONTANA STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/07 – 9/30/09

Note: Check either yes or no for each item):

	Yes	No
Statewide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Center-based Child Care Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Group Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Family Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To In-Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The majority of approved training events in Montana are open to the public which might also include Legally Unregistered Providers, parents, and Head Start and private part-day preschool (non-licensed) program staff and public school teachers. Mechanisms for training approval for special events offered by community based agencies also exist. This allows practitioners to choose training that based upon their needs and interests, providing and training needs. This provides richer and more in-depth intermediate training opportunities for practitioners across the state.

Describe how the plan addresses early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.

The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base (core competencies) underwent an extensive revision in 2003-04 that included a comprehensive update to the Curriculum content area. This revision occurred at the same time the Montana Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) were being developed and therefore both documents are aligned with each other. The Knowledge Base revision was led by members of the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium, many members of which were active participants on committees developing specific sections of the ELGs. Both documents include specific curriculum sections on Language and Literacy and Mathematics and Numeracy. Training has been conducted statewide for trainers and practitioners that outline the linkages between both and also the Family Companion Piece to the ELG developed and distributed over the past year. The MT ELG booklet and the Knowledge Base have been adopted as texts for early childhood education courses statewide. Approved training in the aforementioned content areas is linked to both through the formulation of learning objectives as part of the training approval process.

Are program or provider-level incentives offered to encourage provider training and education?



Yes. If yes, **describe**, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.

Montana has a rich variety of programs under the umbrella name of *Best Beginnings* to promote training and continuing education and provide incentives to move up the Career Path. Montana has a variety of programs to promote training and continuing education and provide incentives to students to continue their education:

- Merit Pay awards \$500 or \$250 to practitioners, who apply for, develop and complete an individualized training plan of 50 hours or 23 hours respectively of training within a year. The plan must address training within the Knowledge Base content areas that include all areas of early childhood curriculum.
- Merit Pay awards \$750 to undergraduate/post graduate students enrolled in early childhood higher education that leads to a CDA, AA or BA/BS, MA degree in Early Childhood.
- Merit Pay awards \$500 to practitioners, who apply for, and complete the 60-hour West Ed Infant Toddler training which allows them to become a Montana Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver.
- CDA Assessment Scholarships to help students pay the cost of CDA assessment.
- Best Beginnings Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Stipend Program awards Montana Certified Infant Toddler caregivers, who are working a minimum of 5 hours per day directly with infants and toddlers, a maximum stipend amount of \$1,600 over an eighteen month time period.
- Montana has begun the preliminary planning on building incentives, such as the I/T stipend, for teachers working with 3-5 year olds. Linking such stipends to specific training completed in the ELGs and development of a comprehensive self-assessment utilizing the Knowledge Base are being discussed as possible viable strategies.



No. If no, **describe** any plans to offer incentives to encourage provider training and education, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts?

As applicable, does the State assess the effectiveness of its professional development plan, including the achievement of any specified goals or desired outcomes?

- ☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** how the professional development plan's effectiveness/goal is assessed.

The Career Development Work Plan is written annually after receiving input from the Advisory Board, MECAC Quality Committee, and from the field. Biannual Advisory Board Meetings guide the direction of the career development program at the Early Childhood Project. The ECSB monitors the achievement of the goals and objectives of the annual work plan.

Additionally quarterly reports are submitted to track progress toward goals and relevant data from the database that manages all components of career development.

- ☐ No. If no, **describe** any plans to include assessments of the professional development plan's effectiveness/goal achievement.

Does the State assess the effectiveness of specific professional development initiatives or components?

- ☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** how specific professional development initiatives or components' effectiveness is assessed.

All programs and features are reviewed by the ECSB and the Career Development Advisory Board. The ECP staff use continuous informal evaluation and assessment strategies to upgrade and improve effectiveness of all operations and programs. Data reports are being more closely analyzed for trends, gaps, etc. to inform state future planning of training, education, incentive programs and other quality improvement mechanisms across the system.

The ECCS and ECPPD work will strengthen cross-sector professional development in MT.

- ☐ No. If no, **describe** any plans to include assessments of specific professional development initiatives or components' effectiveness.

As applicable, does (or will) the State use assessment to help shape or revise its professional development plan?

- ☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** how assessment informs the professional development plan.

This is a continuous vital process through a variety of groups that include the Statewide Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium, the Career Development Advisory Board, OPI's Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development, the Montana Center for Inclusion in Early Childhood (University of Montana) and others.

- ☐ No. If no, **describe** any plans to include assessment to inform the professional development plan.

PART 6
HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS

(Only the 50 States and the District of Columbia complete Part 6.)

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRCHSCC) of DHHS's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports a comprehensive, current, on-line listing of the licensing and regulatory requirements for child care in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In lieu of requiring a State Lead Agency to provide information that is already publicly available, ACF accepts this compilation as accurately reflecting the States' licensing requirements. The listing, which is maintained by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>.

6.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, §98.16(j))

- 6.1.1 Are all center-based providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation?
- ☒ Yes. Answer 6.1.2, skip 6.1.3, and go to 6.2.
- ☐ No. If no, **describe** which center-based providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.
- 6.1.2 Have center licensing requirements as they relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2)&(3))
- ☐ Yes. If yes, **describe** the changes.
- ☒ No.
- 6.1.3 For center-based care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:
- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
 - Building and physical premises safety

- Health and safety training

6.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.2.1 Are all group home providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- ☒ Yes. Answer 6.2.2, skip 6.2.3, and go to 6.3.
- ☐ No. If no, **describe** which group home providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

6.2.2 Have group home licensing requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- ☐ Yes. If yes, **describe** the changes.
- ☒ No.

6.2.3 For group home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

6.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.3.1 Are all family child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- ☒ Yes. Answer 6.3.2, skip 6.3.3, and go to 6.4.
- ☐ No. If no, **describe** which family child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

Family Child Care providers under State law are subject to registration and licensing requirements and as such are included in the compilation of state regulations as specified in the NRCHSCC.

Montana is electing to answer section 6.3.3 to address the category of care known as Legally Unregistered Providers (LUP), which are not registered/licensed and are not included in NRCHSCC's compilation.

Legally Unregistered Providers— are defined as those who provide care to one or two children from separate families or the children of one family. These providers are LEGAL according to state law and as such qualify for CCDF funds, but they are not licensed or registered. Legally Unregistered Providers (LUP) care for children *in the home of the provider*.

6.3.2 Have family child care provider requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- ☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** the changes.

Child care center directors are now required to complete 15 hours of training per year in order to maintain their center license.

- ☐ No.

6.3.3 For family care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

For clarification purposes the following health and safety requirements apply to legally unregistered providers (LUP) and legally unregistered in-home providers (LUI). The only difference between LUP and LUI is the place where care

is occurring. LUPs provide care in the home of the provider and LUIs provide care in the home of the child. The regulations surrounding these categories of care are not reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation of state licensing/registration requirements.

Providers known as legally unregistered providers (LUP) are not subject to the same level of health and safety requirements as registered or licensed providers. They must however, meet the following requirements:

1. Be 18 years of age;
2. Be mentally and physically capable of providing child care that meets safety, health and other basic child care requirements;
3. Not have a substantiated report involving harm, or physical or sexual abuse to children or adults;
4. Not be convicted or adjudicated of a crime involving harm to children, or physical or sexual violence against any person;
5. Not be included in the parent's cash assistance payment;
6. Is not currently diagnosed or receiving therapy or medication for a mental illness or emotional disturbance which might create a risk to children in care;
7. Is not chemically dependent upon drugs or alcohol;
8. Agree to attend an orientation session within 60 days of approval to participate in the program. This orientation training session at a minimum by law and administrative rule, will consist of at least the following topics:
 - Health protection;
 - Child safety;
 - Child development and well being;
 - Intake record keeping;
 - Staffing requirements;
 - Universal precautions;
 - Insurance requirements.
9. Provide care to the children of one family or, if the children are from different families, may care for two or fewer children; and
10. Not be a parent or person acting in loco parentis.

Legally unregistered providers must attend an orientation session within 60 days of approval to participate in the program. This orientation session is designed to give all providers--including registered and licensed providers-- information about health and safety standards (including information on immunizations, building safety, and equipment safety), state payment information, business planning, child care nutrition, and information on creating a positive, developmentally appropriate environment. Therefore, LUP/LUI providers are made aware of the requirements through the orientation process.

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

Legally unregistered child care providers (LUPs) and receive training in the prevention and control of infectious diseases and immunization recommendations in the health segment of the required orientation class. A self-assessment checklist is included on the LUP/LUI application, which is signed and received by the provider and the parent.

- Building and physical premises safety

Legally unregistered child care providers (LUPs) receive training on building and physical safety in the safety segment of the required orientation class. A self-assessment checklist is included on the LUP/LUI application, which is signed and received by the provider and the parent.

- Health and safety training

Legally unregistered child care providers (LUPs) receive training in health and safety in the health and safety segments of the required orientation class. A self-assessment checklist is included on the LUP/LUI application, which is signed and received by the provider and the parent.

The LUP/LUI application and self-assessment is included as **Attachment6.3.3**.

6.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

- 6.4.1 Are all in-home child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under the State law reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation referenced above?

☐ Yes. Answer 6.4.2, skip 6.4.3, and go to 6.5.

☒ No. If no, **describe** which in-home child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

Legally Unregistered In-Home (LUI) Providers—these providers are defined as those who provide care to one or two children from separate families or the child of one family. These providers are LEGAL according to state law and as such qualify for CCDF funds, but they are not licensed or registered. LUI providers *provide care in the child's home*.

- 6.4.2 Have in-home health and safety requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

☐ Yes. If yes, **describe** the changes.

☒ No.

- 6.4.3 For in-home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

For clarification purposes *the following health and safety requirements apply to legally unregistered providers (LUP) and legally unregistered in-home providers (LUI). The only difference between and LUP and an LUI is the place where care is occurring. LUPs provide care in the home of the provider and LUIs provide care in the home of the child. The regulations surrounding these categories of care are not reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation of state licensing/registration requirements.*

Providers known as “legally unregistered in-home providers” (LUIs) are not subject to the same level of health and safety requirements as registered or licensed providers. They must however, meet the following requirements:

1. Be 18 years of age;
2. Be mentally and physically capable of providing child care that meets safety, health and other basic child care requirements;
3. Not have a substantiated report involving harm, or physical or sexual abuse to children or adults;
4. Not be convicted or adjudicated of a crime involving harm to children, or physical or sexual violence against any person;
5. Not be included in the parent’s cash assistance payment;
6. Is not currently diagnosed or receiving therapy or medication for a mental illness or emotional disturbance which might create a risk to children in care;
7. Is not chemically dependent upon drugs or alcohol;
8. Agree to attend an orientation session within 60 days of approval to participate in the program. This orientation training session at a minimum by law and administrative rule, will consist of at least the following topics:
 - Health protection;
 - Child safety;
 - Child development and well being;
 - Intake record keeping;
 - Staffing requirements;
 - Universal precautions;
 - Insurance requirements.
9. Provide care to the children of one family or, if the children are from different families, may care for two or fewer children; and
10. Not be a parent or person acting in loco parentis.

Legally unregistered in-home providers (LUI) must attend an orientation session within 60 days of approval to participate in the program. This orientation session is designed to give all providers--including registered and licensed providers--information about health and safety standards (including information on immunizations, building safety, and equipment safety), state payment information, business planning, child care nutrition, and information on creating a positive, developmentally appropriate environment. Therefore, LUP/LUI providers are made aware of the requirements through the orientation process

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

Legally unregistered in-home child care providers (LUIs) receive training in the prevention and control of infectious diseases and immunization recommendations in the health segment of the required orientation class. A self-assessment checklist is included on the LUP/LUI application, which is signed and received by the provider and the parent.

- Building and physical premises safety

Legally unregistered in-home providers (LUIs) receive training on building and physical safety in the safety segment of the required orientation class. A self-assessment checklist is included on the LUP/LUI application, which is signed and received by the provider and the parent

- Health and safety training

Legally unregistered in-home providers (LUIs) receive training in health and safety in the health and safety segments of the required orientation class. A self-assessment checklist is included on the LUP/LUI application, which is signed and received by the provider and the parent

The LUP/LUI application and self-assessment is included as **attachment 6.3.3.**

6.5 Exemptions to Health and Safety Requirements

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care) may be exempted from health and safety requirements. (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A))
Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- ☒ **All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 6.1 - 6.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- ☐ **All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- ☐ **Some or all** relative providers are subject to different health and safety requirements from those described in sections 6.1 - 6.4. The following describes those requirements and identifies the relatives they apply to:

6.6 Enforcement of Health and Safety Requirements

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

- Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

☒ Yes. If yes, **indicate** which providers are subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

All providers are visited on an unannounced basis. This includes any and all types of inspections such as Renewal Inspection, Complaint Inspection, or the mandatory 20% surveys.

By state law, 20% of all family and group day care home providers are subject to an unannounced inspection. The Department calculates this figure based upon the total number of family and group providers and divides by 20%. We calculate on a licensing service area basis as well as a state-wide basis.

Day Care Centers receive at least two visits per year unless the facility has qualified for an extended license. One of the two visits is for the purposes of renewing the license, while the second visit gives the department to observe the 'program' and validate other requirements which may have been a concern during the renewal visit.

Family and Group Day Care Homes are not inspected annually, however, 20% of all family and group homes are inspected on a yearly basis. Follow up inspections may occur if the deficiencies were such that an observation of compliance was deemed necessary

☐ No.

- Are child care providers subject to background checks?

☒ Yes. If yes, **indicate** which types of providers are subject to background checks and when such checks are conducted:

Licensed and registered day care providers (Centers, FDC and GDC) are subject to a name based (State) criminal and CPS background checks on an annual basis. If upon initial issuance of the license or registration, the provider has lived out of state within the preceding 5 years, an out-of-state background check is conducted. In many instances, it is difficult to obtain the criminal background results; therefore, the department obtains the providers fingerprints and an FBI background check is done.

☐ No.

- Does the State require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? (Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

☒ Yes. If yes, **describe** the State's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

According to 37.95.183 (5)-(6), ARM:

(5) The provider shall submit a report to the appropriate local office of the department within 24 hours after the occurrence of an accident causing injury to a child that resulted in the child being hospitalized, requiring ambulance transport or intervention, or physician treatment... A copy of the report shall be provided to the parents of the children involved and a copy retained on file at the day care facility. The department requires that any injury that results in medical treatment be reported to the department.

(6) A notation of all injuries must be made on the child's medical record including the date, time of day nature of the injury, treatment and whether the parent was notified.

☐ No.

- Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

State Law mandates that the department must visit and inspect at least 20% of all registered providers. As a matter of policy, the program has decided that all newly registered facilities will receive a visit within 120 days of being registered. So, not only are we visiting 20% of facilities, we are also visiting new providers. This effort has helped those new providers understand and comply with the rules early on.

All day care centers are inspected at least two times a year—unless these facilities have obtained an extended license. One visit must pertain to the licensing process, while the second is an observation visit and can address and follow up on any concerns found during the licensing inspection. Centers are also required to have inspections from the local health department as well as the fire department.

6.7 Exemptions from Immunization Requirements

The State assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The State exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- ☒ Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- ☒ Children who receive care in their own homes.
- ☐ Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- ☒ Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

PART 7
HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES

(Only the Territories complete Part 7)

7.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers in the Territories
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all center-based care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

7.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers in the Territories
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all group home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

7.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers in the Territories
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all family child care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)

- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

7.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers in the Territories (658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all in-home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

7.5 Exemptions to Territorial Health and Safety Requirements

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives may be exempted from health and safety requirements: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care). (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A)). Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- ☐ **All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- ☐ **All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- ☐ **Some or all** relative providers are subject to **different** health and safety requirements from those described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 and the following describes those different requirements and the relatives they apply to:

7.6 Enforcement of Territorial Health and Safety Requirements

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how Territorial health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

☐ Yes. If yes, **indicate** which providers are subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

☐ No.

Are child care providers subject to background checks?

☐ Yes. If yes, **indicate** which types of providers are subject to background checks and when such checks are conducted:

☐ No.

Does the Territory require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? (Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

☐ Yes. If yes, **describe** the Territory's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

☐ No.

Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

7.7 Exemptions from Territorial Immunization Requirements

The Territory assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the Territorial public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The Territory exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- ☐ Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- ☐ Children who receive care in their own homes.
- ☐ Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- ☐ Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

APPENDIX 1
PROGRAM ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The Lead Agency, named in Part 1 of this Plan, assures that:

- (1) upon approval, it will have in effect a program that complies with the provisions of the Plan printed herein, and is administered in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended, Section 418 of the Social Security Act, and all other applicable Federal laws and regulations. (658D(b), 658E(a))
- (2) the parent(s) of each eligible child within the State who receives or is offered child care services for which financial assistance is provided is given the option either to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of the service; or to receive a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)(i))
- (3) in cases in which the parent(s) elects to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practicable. (658E(c)(2)(A)(ii))
- (4) the child care certificate offered to parents shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract. (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))
- (5) with respect to State and local regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates, and registration requirements, State or local rules, procedures or other requirements promulgated for the purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund will not significantly restrict parental choice among categories of care or types of providers. (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(p), §98.30(g), §98.40(b)(2), §98.41(b), §98.43(c), §98.45(d))
- (6) that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))
- (7) that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant, State general revenue funds for child care assistance for low-income families. (P.L. 109-149)

The Lead Agency also certifies that:

- (1) it has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund afford parents unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the normal hours of operations and whenever such children are in the care of such providers. (658E(c)(2)(B))
- (2) it maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C))

- (3) it will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices. (658E(c)(2)(D))
- (4) it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided in the State. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (5) there are in effect within the State (or other area served by the Lead Agency), under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children; these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the Child Care and Development Fund. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (6) procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(G))
- (7) payment rates under the Child Care and Development Fund for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the State or sub-State area that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs. (658E(c)(4)(A))

APPENDIX 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY TERMINOLOGY

For purposes of determining eligibility and priority for CCDF-funded child care services, lead agencies must **define** the following *italicized* terms. (658P, 658E(c)(3)(B))

- *attending* (a job training or educational program; include minimum hours if applicable) --A person is considered to be attending, whether part-time or full-time, if they remain in good standing with either the job training or education program in which they are enrolled. Child care is allowed for scheduled class time and the time necessary to commute between the parent's home, the day care facility and the education or training facility.
- *in loco parentis* - An adult friend or relative with whom the child resides, whether or not custody is court ordered.
- *job training and educational program* - A job-training program is a program designed to assist eligible families to become self-sufficient by providing needed employment-related activities and supportive services. An education program is a program that is recognized by the State of Montana as an accredited education program. Job training and educational programs include but are not limited to vocational-technical schools, business colleges, junior colleges, universities, and/or special classes which may be classified as "employment related training". An educational program may also include students working to support their education (i.e. work study).
- *physical or mental incapacity* (if the Lead Agency provides such services to children age 13 and older) - Children under the age of 19, with disabilities or cognitive delay, who are not able without assistance, to properly manage or care for his/her person. Appropriate clinical authorities must document this determination.
- *protective services* - To qualify for child protective services (CPS) child care, the child must need care because of the danger of neglect or abuse. The need for protective services is determined by county social workers. CPS child care for foster care families and respite care require approval of DPHHS Family Services Regional Administrators.
- *residing with* - A child must live in the same household as the parent, or person acting in loco parentis, during the period for which child care services are requested.
- *special needs child* - A child with special needs is an individual age 0 to 18, with an Individual Education Plan or an Individual Family Service Plan, who, because of his/her disability or cognitive delay, is not able to care for him or herself without assistance.
- *very low income* - Families whose income falls below the Montana TANF Monthly Income Benefit Standards to be used with adults included in the TANF filing/assistance unit [Montana TANF Manual Sec. 001, page 4]. Beginning August 1, 2003, the following standards apply:

STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/05 – 9/30/07

Family Size	Very Low Monthly Income
1	\$ 221
2	\$ 298
3	\$ 375
4	\$ 452
5	\$ 530

- *working* (include minimum hours if applicable) - An individual is working when s/he performs any paid type of legal labor on either a full or part time basis and has documents to show income received. Self-employment is determined for the person submitting evidence based on IRS income guidelines.
 - ❑ Two parent families must work a minimum of 120 hours per month.
 - ❑ Single parent families must work a minimum of 60 hour per month.
 - ❑ Single parents, while attending school full time, must work a minimum of 40 hour per month.
 - ❑ Disabled individuals, who are determined unable to care for their children by a physician or licensed psychologist, are not subject to a minimum hourly work requirement.
- Additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility or priority established by the Lead Agency:
 - a. *TANF families* – TANF families are families who participate in an approved family investment activities in Montana’s welfare reform program.
 - b. *Foster care* – Twenty-four hour out-of-home care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services has placement responsibility.
 - c. *Medical emergencies* –An unexpected medical condition of a parent or child, interrupting employment for less than three months. The parent must have employment to which they will return and a physician’s statement identifying the medical need for rest.
 - d. *Respite care* -The short-term supervision or care of a foster child in an emergency or on an intermittent basis.
 - e. *Teen attending high school* –A teen parent attending high school is guaranteed child care assistance during school and work hours. Child care is not provided for after-school study time.